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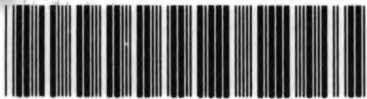
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THE PLAGUE AT MARSEILLES.

ANECDOTES AND INCIDENTS

Ecclesiastical and Religious.



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THE contents of this volume have been collected, not indeed at random, if thereby be understood absence of design or of discrimination in selection, yet in a certain sense at haphazard and without order or method, according as they occurred to the memory or fell under the observation. So vast and various and virtually inexhaustible are the stores from which the selection has been made, that there was no reason in the nature of things why the number should not have been indefinitely extended. The Anecdotes and Incidents here given are to be taken, therefore, merely as a few, and a very few, samples of the boundless treasures which are to be found for the seeking in ecclesiastical history, the lives of saints, the annals of the religious orders, and the traditions which lie scattered about over the wide range of Catholic literature generally. Some have been chosen because of their indubitable authenticity and historical value; others for their strangeness; others, again, for their simple beauty; others for the sake of the striking example or moral they supply; and all as an incentive to the reader, whether student, inquirer, or one who looks only for agreeable aliment to the mind and lessons of practical wisdom, to penetrate for himself into the mines of wealth which lie open at his feet. The compiler has seized without compunction whatever came to hand, transferring

bodily to his pages such compositions as were in a form suited to his purpose—and to the authors or retailers of which he here begs to render his respectful acknowledgments—abridging, condensing, rearranging, rewriting, where necessary, in order to shape them to his plan and to bring them within the scope of his design. He has aimed at variety ; his object has been to amuse and instruct, and to do both in a concise and concentrated form by means of short and moving instances. How far he has succeeded in his intention it is for the reader to judge.

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ANECDOTES AND INCIDENTS.



1.

ST. JOHN AND THE ROBBER.

AFTER the death of our Divine Lord, the apostle St. John retired to Ephesus, where he fixed his abode. While passing through a certain town in Asia, he observed, among the crowd who were listening to his discourse, a young man of fair stature and prepossessing appearance; for whom he conceived so deep an interest, that he consigned him to the especial care of the bishop of the place, saying, "In the presence of Christ, and before this congregation, I earnestly recommend this young man to your care." The bishop undertook the charge; and in fulfilment of his promise took the young man into his own house, and instructed him in the principles of piety and of the love of God; and, when he considered him sufficiently prepared, he first baptised, and then confirmed him. Believing him to be now capable of self-guidance, the bishop relaxed his watchfulness over him, and left him more to his own devices. But the young man abused the confidence which was placed in him, and falling into the company of idle youths of his own age, was induced to lead a dissipated and lawless life; until at length, despairing of his salvation, he set no bounds to his excesses, but gloried in surpassing all his companions in wickedness. Finally, at the head of the most reckless and abandoned among them, he became a professed bandit, and was renowned for his violence and cruelty. Some

time afterwards, St. John again passed through the same town; and after other affairs were concluded, he said to the bishop, "Restore me that which Jesus Christ and I committed to your keeping in presence of the Church." The bishop at first thought the apostle's inquiry had reference to some money which had been intrusted to him, and was at a loss to know his meaning until St. John added, "Give me back the young man whom I solemnly delivered to your charge; it is his soul I ask of you."

Then the bishop, with downcast eyes and with sighs and tears, answered, "Alas! he is dead."

"How and by what manner of death did he die?" inquired the apostle.

"He is dead to God," replied the bishop; "he is a profligate, an outcast, a robber; he has forsaken the Church, and taken to the mountain with companions as wicked as himself."

At these words the aged saint rent his garments, uttered an exceeding bitter cry, and striking his hand upon his brow, "Truly," he exclaimed, "a trusty guardian have I provided for the soul of my brother!"

Then, calling instantly for a horse and a guide, he rode away, attired as he was, to the mountain. Scarcely had he reached the haunt of the robbers, when he was seized by the sentinels, who were struck with astonishment when, instead of attempting to fly or begging for his life, he cried, "It is for this that I am come; lead me to your captain." No sooner, however, did the young man recognise the apostle than he fled from his face with shame and confusion. Unmindful of his age and infirmities, the saint pursued him, crying after him again and again, "My son, why do you fly? Why fly from your father, a helpless and unarmed old man? Have pity on me! Fear nothing, O my child! There is yet place for repentance; there is yet hope of salvation: I will answer for you to Jesus Christ; I will willingly give my life for you, as He gave His for all. Only come back; it is Jesus Christ who sends me to you."

Hearing himself thus addressed, the young man stood still, with his eyes fixed on the ground; then, throwing away his arms, he trembled and burst into tears.

When the apostle came up, the penitent threw himself at his feet, imploring forgiveness; hiding, however, his right hand, sullied with so many crimes. St. John, with wonderful condescension and tenderness, fell on his knees before him, kissed the hand which the other still endeavoured to conceal, assured him again and again of the Divine pardon, and, earnestly praying for him, led him, as in triumph, into the church. For his sake he tarried some time in the place, praying and fasting with him and for him; comforting him with marks of sweet affection, and encouraging him with most affecting words of sacred Scripture. Nor did he leave him until he had restored him to the communion of the Church and to the participation of the holy Sacraments.

2.

OUR LADY OF BUGLOSE.

In the department of the Landes, near Bourdeaux, stands the Chapel of our Lady of Buglose, of which the following legend is recorded, relating to the times of the religious troubles of the sixteenth century.

At the first report of the approach of the destroyers, some Catholics, wishing at least to preserve the image of our Lady of Buglose,—a beautiful marble statue long held in great veneration,—carried it during the night from the chapel, and concealed it among some bushes in a marsh. Thirty years elapsed before perfect tranquillity was restored; and it so happened that the men who had concealed the image all died, and their secret was thus buried with them. The old men who remained, and who had repaired the sanctuary of their dear Lady, remembered with regret the image which had smiled upon them in their childhood; but they

sought in vain for any trace of it, and gave up the search in despair. One day, however, a young shepherd of the parish of Poy, in the year 1620, who was accustomed to drive his herds to pasture on the land surrounding the marsh, remarked that one of his oxen, which had wandered amongst the bushes, stopped at a certain spot and bellowed violently. As this happened two or three times, the shepherd's curiosity was excited; and anxious to discover the cause of so strange an occurrence, he mounted a tree, and to his astonishment beheld the animal standing over what appeared to be a human figure, half-buried in the bushes. Struck with fear, he hastily descended, and ran at full speed to arouse the neighbourhood with the startling intelligence. The principal inhabitants, headed by the rector of Poy, hastened to the spot; and making their way through the bushes, found to their great surprise a marble image of the Blessed Virgin, still beautiful and perfect, but half-buried in the marsh.

The old people of the village instantly recognised with intense joy the image of Our Lady which had formerly stood in her chapel, and which had lain hidden for half a century. It was taken up, and placed on a temporary pedestal ornamented with green branches, under a canopy of flowers. It remained there for a year, during which many favours were bestowed by Mary on her devoted children. Among other wonders, a spring burst forth at the foot of the image, which still continues to flow at the present day. The Bishop of Dax, believing that he discerned the hand of God in the graces which Mary had accorded to her votaries, ordered the image to be carried in solemn procession to the parish-church of Poy. On the day appointed for the translation, a large concourse of people had collected together from the neighbourhood, and the procession began to move. But when the image had reached the ruins of the ancient church where it had formerly stood, the animals which drew the car stood still, and could not be induced by any means to proceed further. This

was considered by the bishop and his assistants as an evident sign of our Lady's pleasure that her image should be reinstated in its ancient sanctuary.

It was accordingly erected in the chapel, which was immediately rebuilt; and with so much zeal, that it was ready to be opened on Whit-Monday, in the year 1622. The remarkable circumstances attending the recovery of the image were painted on the walls of the church; and, in allusion to the animal who discovered it, it has ever since been called "Our Lady of Buglose."*

The chapel became now a frequent object of pilgrimage; and in 1606 the Bishop of Dax made it still more widely known by bestowing it upon the order of the Lazarists, founded by St. Vincent de Paul.† Many wonderful conversions, cures, and graces of various kinds were obtained at this venerated sanctuary. In the time of the revolution of 1789, amidst the general plunder and destruction of the neighbouring churches, the chapel of our Lady of Buglose remained untouched, owing to a circumstance sufficiently remarkable to be here related.

A band of miscreants invaded our Lady's sanctuary, provided with ladders, axes, hammers, and other weapons of destruction, and uttering the most horrible blasphemies. Some of the impious crew had mounted the ladders, while others were beginning to dismantle the altar, and to tear down the religious symbols and memorials of piety within their reach; when suddenly the hands of all were arrested and every tongue silenced by a hollow threatening sound, which seemed to issue from the vaults of the chapel and to shake its very walls. This noise became so loud, that, unable to comprehend its cause, and seized with the fear of being buried alive, the sacrilegious wretches fled in haste, leaving their implements behind them; and so great a

* "Buglose" in the language of the country signifies the "bellowing of an ox."

† A tradition exists that it was in the old Chapel of Buglose that St. Vincent de Paul said his first Mass.

dread did this circumstance excite in the country around, that no further attempt was ever made to deface or pillage the chapel of our Lady of Buglose, which still continued to be visited as of old by crowds of pious pilgrims and devout worshippers.

3.

A MOST CHRISTIAN KING.

Louis XII., on his accession to the throne of France, drew up a list of the noblemen of the court against whom he had had cause of complaint during the reign of his predecessor Charles VIII., whilst he was Duke of Orleans, and placed a cross against the name of each. This act of the king's by some means transpired; and, fearful of falling victims to the resentment of their prince, most of the nobles in question were on the point of withdrawing from court. But Louis reassured them by these truly Christian and kingly words: "The cross which I placed against your names speaks not of vengeance; it does but signify, like that of our Divine Lord, pardon for all injuries which I may have received from you."

4.

THE CHEVALIER OF ST. LOUIS AND HIS SERVANT.

An old Chevalier of St. Louis, who was reduced to a state of extreme poverty, took up his abode in Paris, as the place where he could best conceal his destitute condition from the eyes of all. A single straw-mattress was the whole furniture of the miserable garret in which he lived; his dress consisted only of the tattered remains of his old uniform; and friends or companions he had none, save one faithful servant, who had lived with him for many years. At last, with tears in his eyes, he said to this attached domestic, "You see the state

to which I am reduced; you have shared my sorrows too long. Adversity is my portion; it is best that you should leave me now and for ever. My greatest regret is my entire inability to repay your services." "My beloved master," replied the man, throwing himself at the feet of the veteran, "can you imagine that I could ever be base enough to desert you in your misfortunes, when in happier times I profited so much by your kindness? No, I will never leave you; and be assured, my solicitude for you will suggest to me some way by which I shall be able to support both you and myself." It is impossible to describe the emotion which filled the breast of the old soldier at this touching proof of disinterested affection. He warmly embraced his faithful servant, and said, "Heaven; then, has some happiness and comfort in store for me. May God reward your generous devotion!" Urged by the hope of providing for his patron, the servant used every means that ingenuity and affection could devise to obtain money; not unfrequently he received assistance from different public charities, and was never so happy as when his day's earnings enabled him to purchase a small quantity of wine for his old master. "Thank God," he would say, "we have been prosperous to-day." And then he would endeavour to cheer the old man's drooping spirits by relating any thing interesting that he had chanced to hear or see in the course of his wanderings.

But one unlucky day this worthy man, who had for some time attracted the notice of the police, was arrested. His apparent activity and vigour deceived them; and they looked upon him as an idle beggar, who, in all probability, was living a disorderly life at the expense of the public. He was taken before a magistrate and examined; but having nothing to conceal, he answered every question frankly, and then begged the magistrate, as a particular favour, to hear his statement in private. The judge, who was favourably impressed by the man's manner, consented, and the servant thus addressed him: "I feel sure, my lord,

you will grant me your protection when you learn the motives of my conduct." He then detailed all that had passed between himself and his master; and the magistrate, who was deeply touched by his story, sent an officer to examine into the truth of his statement. The officer found the old warrior stretched upon a bed of straw in the greatest poverty, and returned at once to the magistrate to relate what he had seen. The judge lost no time in mentioning his case to the king, who granted a pension both to the chevalier and to his faithful servant.

5.

CHARITY OF TWO CHRISTIAN WOMEN IN CHINA.

A story, illustrating the wonderful fruits of charity, is told of a slave, who was so painfully afflicted as to be an object of repugnance and disgust, and on that account had been dismissed from the post he occupied in the palace of the Emperor of China. He knew not whither to go, nor how to employ himself. The same cause which rendered him unfit for service in the royal palace disqualified him also for every other situation. In this extremity, two Christian widows received him under their roof. Though supporting themselves with difficulty by the labour of their hands, and having no friends to whom they could apply in any season of peculiar distress, they did not hesitate to afford shelter and support to a wretched being whose condition was more pitiable than their own. They nursed and tended him day and night, denying themselves even the necessaries of life in order to supply his wants. Their one great object was his conversion; and they hoped by instruction to awaken in him a desire to embrace the Christian faith, and save his soul. After three months' unceasing care and attention, they ventured to speak to him of religion, and of his own spiritual condition. But the ungrateful wretch would not listen to any thing they said;

and, as if he were possessed by the devil, gave utterance to the most horrid imprecations, bringing forward charges against his benefactresses which were equally cruel and unjust. He left their house without a single expression of gratitude, and threatened to proclaim to the world that they were Christians. But these pious women bore his calumnious accusations with the utmost patience, and without uttering one word of reproach. They knew that if the fact of their being Christians were known, it would endanger their lives; for the hatred which was felt to their religion was so intense, that the most cruel tortures were inflicted on any who ventured to profess the true faith. This was of course well known to the slave, who had been taught that to persecute a Christian was not only allowable but meritorious. For more than a month these holy women lived in daily expectation of suffering death for a faith which they never would deny. But after the lapse of a short time, when his small stock of provision was exhausted, the slave again sought his injured benefactresses, and implored of them that charity which was denied him elsewhere. Again was he received by them; again did they wait upon him and minister to his wants: they used every means in their power to assuage his sufferings; and never did a word of complaint escape them, never was any allusion made to his previous ingratitude. Every thing was forgotten in their Christian desire to save his soul. The slave could no longer resist their entreaties. He was amazed at their generosity—so unlike what he had ever experienced before; and with tears he acknowledged that he could not doubt the truth of that religion which inspired such sentiments. He told them that he had long admired their conduct; that, even while he was determined not to heed their advice, he was deeply sensible of their noble behaviour, and implored them to instruct him in the faith they professed. He became humble as a child, and sat at their feet, listening to their instructions, his only desire seeming to be to live in the faith in which they lived.

All this time his disease increased rapidly, and had assumed a more obstinate and violent character. It was evident that nothing less than a miracle could save him. "Let me die a Christian," was his constant exclamation: "let me die a child of God." The poor widows continued their instructions; they prayed for him continually, and he was at last baptised. After a few weeks of suffering, he sank under the disease which had so long afflicted him; but he died full of faith, and his benefactresses had the consolation of knowing that they had not laboured in vain.

6.

FALL OF SIMON MAGUS.

Full of rage and envy at the success of the preachers of the Gospel, the devil now stirred up Simon Magus to oppose and thwart the Apostles of Christ. The chief battle-field was the city of Rome; and there, in the sight of the pagans, was renewed the strife which had been exhibited of old between Moses and the magicians of Egypt. In this war between the agents of Satan and the servants of Jesus, the latter were ever triumphant; Simon was compelled to succumb before the might that was in Peter; his sorceries and diabolical arts were of no avail against the name of Jesus and the sign of the cross.

At length Satan prepared to deal a master-stroke against the faith that he hated, and to cover its professors with confusion. At his instigation Simon declared that, to bring the conflict to an end, and to demonstrate the superiority of the power which he served beyond possible dispute, he would, on a certain Sunday which he named, ascend up into heaven in the sight of the emperor and the people. On the day appointed vast multitudes were assembled, and at Simon's desire Peter was conducted into the midst, that he

might witness the miraculous flight, and acknowledge his defeat and the humiliation of the Christian faith. And, in fact, by the aid of the demons, who are the powers of the air, the arch-heretic soared above the earth, and seemed to be ascending towards heaven; so that, filled with astonishment, the people broke into one universal shout of admiration, and cried, "Simon he is God! Simon, he is God!" Then Peter prayed fervently in his heart; and lifting up his voice, so that all the assembly might hear him, he commanded the demons, in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, their Master and his, to withdraw their support and leave Simon to his fate. In an instant the miserable man fell headlong from that tremendous height, with such velocity that both his thighs were broken, and he was otherwise injured past all hopes of recovery. The next day he died, impenitent and blaspheming to the last.

Such, say the holy Fathers, will likewise be the end of Antichrist, that great and terrible enemy of the Christian name, who will appear at the end of the world. By the power of Satan he will mount up into the air, and will be struck to the earth by lightning from heaven.

7.

DOMINE, QUO VADIS?

The signal victory which St. Peter had gained over Simon the Magician roused the fury of the heathens against the Christians, and especially against the Prince of the Apostles. He was accordingly seized, and thrown into the Mamertine prison; where, however, he converted the two soldiers, Processus and Martinianus, who were set to guard him, and baptised them with the water from a spring which he caused to burst from the rock on which the prison stood. The faithful besought him to make his escape,—to which there was now no obstacle, as his guards had become Christians; imploring

him to reserve himself for the instruction and confirmation of the flock. Peter longed to shed his blood for Jesus, and for a long time remained deaf to their prayers; but at length he suffered himself to be moved by their tears and entreaties, and left the city by night unobserved. Scarcely, however, had he passed through the gate, when he met our Lord walking towards Rome, bearing His cross. "*Domine, quo vadis?*" said the Apostle ("Lord, whither goest Thou?"). Jesus answered, "I go to be crucified again." Then Peter knew what was meant. He knew that Jesus could not be crucified a second time; that He had suffered once for all, and could die no more; he understood therefore that it was His will to be crucified again in the person of His Apostle. He immediately returned to Rome and to his prison; and soon he had the happiness of glorifying his Lord by his death, being, at his own desire, crucified with his head downwards, as deeming himself unworthy of suffering as the Son of God had suffered.

In memory of this appearance of Jesus a church was erected at Rome bearing the title, *Domine, quo vadis?*

8.

SIN BLOTTED OUT.

The following occurrence took place at Paris. A young student, who, at the suggestion of the enemy of mankind, had committed sins which he was ashamed to confess, became so much troubled in his mind that his health began to give way. At length, by God's mercy, fear overcame shame; and going to St. Victor's, he asked to see the prior, and intimated to him that he wished to make his confession. The prior, ever ready for such an office, came immediately, and waited for the youth to begin. But the Lord, who is goodness, power, and mercy, put such contrition into the penitent's heart, that as often as he began the *Confiteor*, his sobs interrupted his words, and he could not

speak. After some time, the prior said to the scholar, "Go and write your sins on a schedule, and bring it to me." The youth left the confessional, wrote down his sins, and returned the next day; and, again unable to speak from the excess of his feelings, handed in the paper. The prior, after looking at it, said he should wish to consult the abbot; and asked if he might show the paper to him. The youth consented. The prior went to the abbot, and, after relating what had occurred, put the schedule into his hands. The abbot opened it; but the writing was entirely effaced; as if to fulfil the words of Isaiah, "*Delevi ut nubem iniquitates tuas, et quasi nebulam peccata tua*"—"I have blotted out thy iniquities as a cloud, and thy sins as a mist." The youth henceforth led a most pious life, and devoted himself wholly to the service of God.

9.

THE YOUTH AND THE SARACEN.

A story is related of a young man who was possessed of every gift of person, mind, and manners calculated to please in society, and who consequently fell a prey to the allurements of the world. His age and inexperience, combined with his love of pleasure and his flow of high spirits, made him an easy victim. He soon adopted the evil maxims and followed the bad example of his companions, until he was drawn to the very threshold of crime. But he had been carefully brought up, and the principles which he had imbibed in his earlier years ere long awakened in him feelings of contrition; added to which, a severe fever brought him to the very verge of the grave, and the fear of death made him reflect seriously upon his past life. He had scarcely recovered from his illness when he resolved to leave the world, and went in search of some solitary spot where he might place himself beyond the reach of those temptations by which he had been over-

come. On his journey he met a Saracen, who accosted him roughly, and inquired of him who he was, whence he came, and whither he was going. The young man answered him frankly, stating exactly the object he was seeking. The Saracen looked at him earnestly, and remarking his youth and the style of his dress, recommended him to wait until he had grown old before he devoted himself to the monastic life. But the young man, wishing to impress upon him the necessity of serving God at all times, and especially in youth, made the following wise reply: "What! would you have me defer the dedication of myself to the service of God until I am grown old? A sacrifice which is made not willingly but of necessity is not worthy of Him; and think you that an old man who can no longer serve his prince is fit to serve the King of kings?" The Saracen, touched by this remark, showed him the way, commending his conduct, and encouraging him to persevere. The young man followed up his intention, and made such ample amends for the disorders of his former life, that he became eminent for his virtues and sanctity.

10.

THE THUNDERING LEGION.

When the emperor Marcus Aurelius was making war upon the Germans and Sarmatians, his troops were reduced to the greatest extremities for want of water. The barbarians had completely surrounded them; and seeing they were absolutely in their power, delayed giving them battle in the hopes that they would perish by heat and thirst. But when they were in the utmost distress, being unable either to fight or to retreat, and compelled to remain at their posts parched and exhausted, the soldiers of a certain legion, who were Christians, threw themselves upon their knees in the sight both of their comrades and of the enemy, and

betook themselves to prayer. Then a strange and marvellous thing happened: suddenly clouds gathered overhead, and a torrent of rain descended. The Romans, raising their mouths towards heaven, received the providential shower; then, turning up their shields and helmets, they drank largely out of them, and gave water to their horses. The barbarians charged furiously upon them, so that they had to drink as they fought, and their blood was mingled with the draught; but when the battle began to go against them, another marvel followed—a violent storm of hail arose, accompanied with flashes of vivid lightning and terrible thunderbolts, which, falling among the enemy, filled them with terror and put them to the rout. "Thus," to cite the description of the pagan historian Dion, "water and fire might be seen falling together from Heaven, that some might drink to their refreshment, and others be burned to death; for the fire did not touch the Romans, or, if so, was at once extinguished; nor did the wet help the barbarians, but burned like oil."

In consequence of this extraordinary intervention of Providence, the emperor, although he did not repeal the laws against the Christians, imposed a still heavier punishment on such as informed against them.

11.

AN UNKNOWN BENEFACTOR.

A young man was stopped in a dark and narrow street by one who demanded his money or his life. His courageous and feeling heart at once distinguished the voice of misery from that of crime, and he felt that he had before him a miserable fellow-creature whom he could relieve.

"What is it you seek, unhappy man?" said he, in a commanding tone.

"Nothing, sir," replied the other, sobbing; "I seek nothing."

"Who are you? and what is your business?"

"I am a poor shoemaker, and I am unable to support my wife and four children."

"But are you speaking the truth?" said the other (feeling pretty sure, however, that it was the truth).

"Where do you live?"

"In such a street, in the house of a baker."

"Come, let us see."

The shoemaker, subdued by his tone of authority, led the young man to the house. There was only a woman in the shop when they arrived.

"Do you know this man?" asked the stranger.

"Yes, sir; he is a shoemaker, who lives in the fifth story, and who has great difficulty in supporting his numerous family."

"Why do you let him want for bread?"

"Sir, we are young people, newly set up in business; we cannot advance much money, and my husband will not let me give this man credit for more than twenty-four sous."

"Give him two loaves. Here, take these loaves, and go up-stairs."

The shoemaker obeyed in great agitation. When they entered the room, his wife and children eagerly devoured the food which was brought to them. The young man had seen enough. He departed, leaving two louis-d'or with the baker's wife, and ordered her to provide the family with bread. Some days later he returned; and bidding the poor man follow him, he brought him to a shop well furnished with all the tools and implements belonging to his trade.

"Would you be an honest and a contented man if this shop were yours?"

"Ah, sir, indeed I should."

After a few necessary preliminaries, the shoemaker was installed in the shop.

The author of this striking act of charity is a young man of twenty-seven, noted for his piety. It is said that the establishment of this shoemaker cost him be-

tween three and four thousand francs. His name is not known, and no one has yet succeeded in discovering who he is.

12.

CONSTANTIA TONDINI.

In the year 1825, a young Roman lady, named Constantia Tondini, after praying in the church of St. Augustine before an image of the Blessed Virgin, resolved to embrace a religious life; and for this purpose set out for the convent of the Annunciation at Terni. Before, however, she had reached her destination, she was seized with a severe attack of illness; and as, on her arrival, the symptoms grew alarmingly worse, she was sent to the convent infirmary.

After remaining there for six months, the physicians ordered her to return to Rome, thinking that her native air would tend to restore her to health; and she was consequently taken back to her parents in the spring of 1826. But neither her native air, nor the mildness of the season, nor medical skill, were of the slightest avail; on the contrary, she became weaker and weaker every day, and was severely affected with spasms, convulsions, and a complication of other maladies. The sick girl earnestly besought the Almighty to grant her that restoration to health which she sought in vain from human aid; at the same time she bitterly bewailed her inability to throw herself at the feet of her dear image at St. Augustine's, which was constantly before her mind. At last she obtained, as a substitute, an engraving of it, which she placed opposite her bed; on this her gaze was almost constantly fixed; and even when the violence of the convulsions obliged her to close her eyes, her face was still turned towards the place where it hung.

On the 6th of February 1827, eleven months after her arrival in Rome, the physicians declared her to

be at the point of death; and her sisters consequently begged her confessor to administer Extreme Unction,—the Holy Viaticum having been given her two days previously. During the administration of the Sacrament, the sisters, seeing Constantia sinking every moment, fell on their knees before the picture of the Madonna of St. Augustine's, and reciting the litany of the Blessed Virgin, recommended the soul of their dying sister to her protection. At this moment one of Constantia's friends arrived, bringing some of the oil from the lamp which burned in St. Augustine's church before the holy image, and anointed with it the limbs of the dying girl. A few hours after, Constantia awoke, and felt as if she had been in a dream. She had regained her speech; her weak and contracted limbs were restored to their former vigour; and all the other symptoms of disease had disappeared. She rose from her bed, asked for her clothes, and put them on, to the joy and astonishment of her family; and when her confessor returned to give her the final benediction, he found her on her knees before the picture of the Blessed Virgin.

"Our Lady of St. Augustine's has cured me," said she; "I am now, thanks to her intercession, quite recovered." She then told them that when she lost her consciousness she beheld the Blessed Virgin, under the familiar form of her beloved image, come and anoint her with cotton soaked in oil, and then disappear.

That evening she supped with the family, eating as the others; and the next morning, when the physician called, he was struck with the greatest astonishment at seeing her walking about perfectly well. He accompanied her to St. Augustine's church, where she returned public thanks to our Lady for her cure. This miracle was examined by order of Leo XII., and was confirmed in a decree dated 14th of September 1827, which declares, "that the instantaneous and complete cure of Constantia Tondini is a great miracle, obtained from Almighty God by the intercession of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary."

13.

CHARITY OF LOUIS XVI.

As Louis XVI. was walking one day by himself, a little boy ran up to him, and begged for alms. "Suppose I were to give money to such a child as you, what would you do with it?" said the king, smiling. "I know very well what I should do with it," replied the boy earnestly; "I should carry it at once to my grandfather, who is very ill, and lying in a wretched loft, where he suffers very much from cold." "Suppose you take me to him," said the king; and, the child gladly assenting, they walked together to the poor old man, who was lying in great suffering on a straw mattress. The king immediately ordered a good bed to be brought for him, and every comfort he thought necessary. The old man, overwhelmed with gratitude, tried to express his thankfulness; but it was not till long after that he or the child had any idea of the rank of their unknown benefactor.

14.

A VISION OF HELL.

Lieutenant-General Cockburn, in his *Voyage up the Mediterranean*, gives the following remarkable extract from the records of the Court of King's Bench for the years 1687-1688:

"An action was brought by a Mrs. Booty against Captain Barnaby, to recover 1000*l.* as damages for the scandal of his assertion that he had seen her deceased husband, Mr. Booty, a receiver, driven into hell.

The journal-books of three different ships were produced in court; and the following passages, recorded in each, submitted to the court by the defendant's counsel:

Thursday, May 14th, 1687. Saw the island of Lipari, and came to an anchor off the same island, and there we were at W.S.W.

Friday, May 15. Captain Barnaby, Captain Bristow, Captain Brown, I, and a Mr. Ball, merchant, went on shore to shoot rabbits on Stromboli; and when we had done, we called all our men together to us, and about three-quarters past three o'clock we all saw two men running towards us with such swiftness, that no living man could run half so fast; when we all of us heard Captain Barnaby say, 'Lord bless us! the foremost is old Booty, my next-door neighbour;' but he said he did not know the other, who ran behind: he was in black clothes, and the foremost was in gray. Then Captain Barnaby desired all of us to take an account of the time, and pen it down in our pocket-books; and when we got on board, we wrote it in our journals; for we saw them run into the flames of fire, and there was a great noise, which greatly affrighted us all, for we none of us ever saw or heard the like before. Captain Barnaby said, 'He was certain it was old Booty which he saw running over Stromboli, and into the flames of hell.'

Then, coming home to England and lying at Gravesend, Captain Barnaby's wife came on board the 6th day of October 1687, at which time Captain Barnaby and Captain Brown sent for Captain Bristow and Mr. Ball, merchant, to congratulate with them; and after some discourse, Captain Barnaby's wife started up and said, 'My dear, old Booty is dead;' and he directly made answer, 'We all saw him run into hell.' Afterwards Captain Barnaby's wife told a gentleman of his acquaintance in London what her husband had said, and he went and acquainted Mrs. Booty of the whole affair; upon that Mrs. Booty arrested Captain Barnaby in a 1000*l.* action for what he had said of her husband. Captain Barnaby gave bail for it, and it came to a trial in the Court of King's Bench; and they had Mr. Booty's wearing-apparel brought into court, and the

sexton of the parish, and the people that were with him when he died; and we swore to our journals, and it came to the same time within two minutes. Ten of our men swore to the buttons on his coat, and that they were covered with the same sort of cloth his coat was made of; and so it proved.

The jury asked Mr. Spinks (whose handwriting, in the journal that happened to be read, appeared) if he knew Mr. Booty? He answered, 'I never saw him till he ran by me on the burning mountains.'

The judge said, 'Lord have mercy on me, and grant I may never see what you have seen. One, two, or three may be mistaken, but thirty never can be mistaken.'

So the widow lost her cause. The defence set up was, that the defendant had spoken no more than had been seen by a number of persons as well as himself."

15.

RODOLPH OF HAPSBURG.

A noble of Germany was one day hunting among the mountains of Switzerland, when he perceived a poor priest, who was bearing the Holy Viaticum to a sick man, endeavouring in vain to cross a torrent that was swollen with the rains. He immediately alighted from his horse, and making the priest mount with the Blessed Sacrament, himself followed on foot through the waters. On reaching the opposite bank, the priest was about to give back the steed to its owner, when the nobleman said, "No; I am not worthy ever to mount again an animal that has been privileged to bear on his back the King of kings, of whom I hold in fief all that I possess;" and the horse ever after remained in the service of the priest and of his church. When the news of this pious act spread among the valleys of Switzerland and the other provinces of Germany, it occasioned a most enthusiastic joy among the

people, high and low ; and shortly afterwards, on the occasion of this nobleman going to visit a certain holy recluse, she predicted that he would be raised to great honour in the world, because he had served with such humility and devotion the Lord of heaven and earth. That nobleman was Rodolph count of Hapsburg, founder of the imperial house of Austria, which has deserved so well of God and of His Church.

16.

INGENIOUS STRATAGEM OF A SHOPKEEPER.

Two rival shopkeepers, who resided in the same town, were living in a state of mutual enmity. At last, in the course of self-examination, one of them felt considerable compunction when he reflected how long he had violated the law of charity, and consulted a pious friend in whom he placed great confidence as to how he could contrive a reconciliation. "I will tell you," replied he, "what I consider would be the best way of proceeding : whenever any one comes to buy any thing of you, and cannot find what will suit him, recommend him to go to your neighbour's shop." He acted on this advice. His rival, learning who had sent his customers to him, felt grateful for kindness from one whom he considered his enemy. He went to thank him, and asked his forgiveness for the enmity which he had borne him ; and at the same time begged to be allowed to consider him for the future among his friends. His offer was cordially accepted ; and religion united in the strictest bonds of friendship those whom interest and jealousy had hitherto divided.

17.

THE CROSS OF CONSTANTINE.

In the year 312, Constantine, while still a pagan,

was on his march to Rome to attack the tyrant Maxentius. His forces were far inferior in numbers and discipline to those of his adversary, whose army was composed in great part of veteran troops long inured to war and victory. Moreover the Emperor Maximin, in the East, was in league with Maxentius, who also calculated on purchasing the aid of Licinius, the other eastern emperor, whose legions might thus fall on Constantine's rear. Nor could the latter forget that on two recent occasions armies far more numerous than his had been signally defeated in the same enterprise on which he was now embarked. In this crisis of affairs, Constantine reflected within himself that the emperors who, in his time, had shown most zeal for idolatry had perished miserably; but that his father, Constantius Chlorus,—who, although himself a pagan, had favoured the Christians,—had received sensible marks of the Divine protection; and he accordingly bethought himself of addressing his supplications to the one only God of heaven and earth. He was praying thus with all the fervour of his heart while marching in the midst of his troops, when suddenly, about mid-day, as the sun was beginning to decline towards the west, he beheld above that luminary a cross of light brighter than the blaze of day, and on it he read, in Greek, these words:

“ BY THIS CONQUER ! ”

at the sight whereof a great amazement seized both the emperor and his whole army, who also beheld the miraculous sign.

That night Constantine lay upon his bed awake, much troubled in his mind, and pondering on what he had beheld; when the Lord Jesus Himself appeared to him, and, showing to him the sign which he had seen in the heavens, bade him henceforth take it as his standard, for that therewith he should triumph over all his enemies. This was the famous Labarum. It is thus described by the historian Eusebius, who saw it

with his own eyes, and who also had from Constantine's lips an exact account of the events which led to its adoption, and which the emperor confirmed to him on his oath: "It consisted of a long spear overlaid with gold, athwart which was laid a piece like a sailyard, framed in fashion of a cross. Upon its top was fixed a crown, composed of gold and precious stones; and inserted in the crown was the monogram or symbol of the saving Name, viz. two Greek letters at once expressive of the figure of the cross and the initial letters of the name of Christ. Moreover, from the cross-piece fixed athwart the spear there hung a banner of purple tissue, studded all over with precious stones, which dazzled the eyes of the beholders with the splendour of their rays, and, being interwoven with much gold, presented a spectacle of inexpressible beauty. This banner was in length exactly equal to its breadth; but the upright staff of the spear was of very great length, and on its upper part, under the trophy of the cross, and at the very top of the banner, embroidered with a variety of colours, it bore a golden picture or medallion of the emperor, half-length, and also medallions of his children." This holy standard was intrusted to the keeping of fifty of the bravest and noblest of the imperial guards, whose duty it was to surround and defend it in the distress of battle, and by whom the post was regarded as the highest in dignity and honour.

On reaching Saxa Rubra, within nine miles of Rome, Constantine, in obedience to a divine revelation, caused the sacred monogram to be emblazoned likewise on the bucklers, helmets, and arms of his legionaries, as he bore it also on his own helmet; and when, on the morning of the great battle, the first rays of the October sun gleamed from the mysterious emblem, already the token to them of so many successes, the soldiers of the Labarum felt themselves fired with an irresistible ardour. Wherever the sacred sign appeared, the enemy gave way before the inferior forces of the Cross; so that Constantine, wherever he saw his troops most pressed

upon, thither ordered the saving trophy to be carried, as some efficacious talisman by which victory was secured. The result was most decisive. They who escaped from the field of battle were overwhelmed in the Tiber. Maxentius had thrown across the river a bridge of boats so contrived as to go to pieces by machinery, which was managed by engineers stationed for the purpose: the tyrant thought thus to take his rival in a snare. But the trap that he had laid for another he fell into himself; for as, in the rout that ensued, he was retreating with his guards over the bridge so cunningly constructed, the boats separated from each other, and both he and all who were with him perished in the waters.

Constantine alludes to the miracle as a notorious fact in the manifesto which he published to the people of the East. Addressing the Most High, he says, "By Thy guidance and assistance I have undertaken and accomplished salutary things: every where carrying before me Thy sign, I have led my army to victory."

18.

FRANCIS DUKE OF GUISE.

Two anecdotes are told of this gentleman which show the genuine nobility of his nature. While besieging Rouen, which was in possession of the Protestant party, a Huguenot attempted to assassinate him, and was taken with his poniard in his hand. The duke questioned him as to his motives. "What have I ever done to you," he asked, "that you should thus treacherously seek my life?" "You have done me no harm," replied the man; "it is because you are the greatest enemy of my religion that I have sought your destruction." "Well," said the prince, "I will show you that my religion is a nobler one than yours. You say that your religion prompted you to kill me, who have done

you no wrong; now mine directs me to pardon you, who have attempted my life." So saying, he gave him a horse and a hundred crowns, and sent him away unhurt.

Soon afterwards took place the battle of Dreux, at which the Catholics were on the point of being defeated with great loss, when the Duke of Guise retrieved the fortunes of the day, and gained a complete victory. The Prince of Condé, the leader of the Huguenot forces, was taken prisoner. This prince had taken delight in representing his adversary's character, both public and private, in the blackest colours; but the duke, so far from resenting his ill conduct, invited him to his table, placed a repast before him, and shared with him the only bed which his tent afforded. The two antagonists lay down side by side; but while the duke soon sank into a sound and peaceful repose, the Prince of Condé could not close an eye. Perhaps a guilty conscience prevented him from sleeping. Certain, however, it is, that the generosity of the duke made no impression on his enemies. Exactly two months afterwards, at the siege of Orleans, this great prince was assassinated by John Poltrot de Mercy, a young Huguenot, who, on being arrested and interrogated, charged Coligny, Theodore Beza, and other Protestant leaders, with having instigated the murder.

19.

ST. CHARLES BORROMEO.

The following anecdote is related of St. Charles Borromeo, in illustration of his abiding sense of the presence of God, and the purity of intention with which he directed to Him every most trifling action of his life.

The saint being one day in company, and accommodating himself to the occasion by playing a game of chess, the conversation chanced to turn on the day of

judgment; and one of the party inquired of the rest what they should do if it were suddenly announced to them that Christ was at hand. One said that he should betake himself to his prayers; another that he should instantly go to confession; a third that he should hasten to the church, and prostrate himself before the Blessed Sacrament. But Charles replied, that he should go on with his game of chess; for that he had begun it for the glory of God, and should continue it for the same end; and that whatever was done with a single view to God was a holy and meritorious act.

20.

THE TREBAN LEGION.

This legion was composed wholly of Christians; and being ordered by the Emperor Maximian to sacrifice to the gods, firmly refused to obey the tyrant's commands. The emperor gave instant orders that every tenth man should be put to death; and this done, again repeated his former commands, and again met with a similar refusal. Furious at being thwarted, he had the legion decimated a second time; but with no other result than confirming the brave soldiers in their generous resolution to perish to a man rather than show honour to idols, or deny the faith of Christ.

Being brought into the presence of the tyrant, they thus addressed him by the mouth of Maurice, one of their captains: "We are your soldiers, sire; but we are also the servants of God. We owe you our service in time of war; but we owe to God the innocence of our lives. From you we receive our pay; but from Him we have received our life. We cannot obey you by renouncing God our Creator—our Master and yours. We are as ready as ever to fulfil your orders in all that is not displeasing to God; but when you bid us do that which is contrary to His law, we must obey God rather

than man. Lead us against the enemy. We are ready to fight against the rebellious and the impious; but we cannot shed the blood of fellow-citizens and innocent men. We took an oath to God before we swore allegiance to you: how can you count upon our fidelity, if we fail in the fidelity we have sworn to God? You bid us seek out and destroy the Christians. Behold us—*we* are Christians; we confess one God, Creator of all things, and Jesus Christ His Son our Lord. We have seen our companions slain before our eyes, and we do but envy them the glory of suffering for their God. From us you have nothing to fear; Christians know how to die, but they do not know how to rebel. We have arms; but we shall not use them: we would rather die innocent than live guilty.”

This bold and generous remonstrance only inflamed the tyrant's rage. Despairing of overcoming their heroic constancy, he determined to massacre the entire legion, and commanded the whole army to surround them and cut them to pieces. These brave warriors threw down their arms; and taking off their armour, they all knelt down, and lifting up their hands to heaven, offered their necks to their murderers. No complaint or cry was heard among them: they spoke only to encourage one another to die for Christ. In a few moments the ground was covered with their dead bodies and dyed with their blood. The number of the martyrs must have amounted to some six thousand six hundred.

21.

CONVERSION OF A CALVINIST OFFICER.

During the religious wars which desolated France, the command of a large body of Calvinists was intrusted to a young nobleman. He marched to meet the Catholic army; and after a short but severe contest the Calvinists were entirely routed, and their young

commander left for dead upon the field of battle. A Catholic priest, who lived near the scene of action, gave orders that this young nobleman, with those of his fellow-officers who were dangerously wounded, should be carried to his house. He nursed them all with unceasing care, and had the satisfaction of seeing them gradually restored to health and strength. The young men were deeply impressed by the purity and sanctity so evident in the daily life of the good priest, and they began to feel some interest in a religion which produced such fruits. A short time before the young nobleman was entirely convalescent, he showed considerable anxiety regarding his host, and one day said to him, "Tell me if it is possible that your opinions coincide with those of our enemies."

"Yes," replied the priest calmly, "they are Catholics, and so am I, and the faith of all Catholics is the same."

"I cannot bear to think so," replied the young man quickly; "for my sake endeavour to believe as we do."

"Impossible," returned the priest; "you are living in error and heresy. You complain of the conduct of Catholics; if there are those among them who lead bad lives, it is because they neglect their religion, and disobey the rules of the Church."

The dignity and firmness with which these words were uttered made a deep impression on the mind of the young man, and he exclaimed, "I know nothing of your religion; I was born and educated as a Protestant; but I can hardly believe that so much piety and wisdom can be the result of error. I have always sought for truth, and now feel an inward conviction that in your faith I shall find it." He then begged to be instructed; and his simple and ingenuous nature soon renounced the errors of Calvinism, and embraced the true faith. He could not, however, convince his fellow-officers of the necessity of the step he had taken; and they returned to the army, leaving him with the good priest, to whom he felt he owed so much gratitude, that he wished for no-

thing better than to spend his life under his roof. The news of his conversion spread rapidly, and was received by his party with deep sorrow and resentment. Some of the most vindictive amongst his former friends vowed vengeance against the priest, and resolved to murder him; but when the plot was told to one of the officers whom he had cured of his wounds, he was so much shocked, that he sent off an express to warn his former captain of the conspiracy, and the time fixed for its execution.

The young man kept this information a profound secret: he was desirous of sparing his friend the slightest anxiety; but he made some excuse by which he persuaded him to absent himself from home on the fatal day. As soon as he was gone, he put on his friend's cassock, and went out to meet the conspirators, who were panic-stricken at finding themselves discovered. "Kill me," said he, "if you will; but do not harm a man who has saved my life." The intended assassins, struck with his intrepidity, implored his pardon, and begged to see the man whom their captain so much respected and loved. He gladly brought them to the priest, and was amply repaid for his courage and self-devotion by seeing them renounce their errors and become converts to the Catholic faith.

22.

THE RESCUE FROM THE LION.

A boy named Daniel Pinus, of noble family, lived in the city of Brussels in the beginning of the sixteenth century. At this time there was a well-known lion, which had been taken by Charles V. in Africa, and which, from its tameness, was allowed to go about loose. Daniel, being between five and six years of age, was walking one day by his mother's side in the Rue des Carmelites, when he perceived the lion approaching in his usual

quiet manner, taking no notice of any thing around him. The child, thinking it would be a great thing to boast of having braved a lion, let go his mother's hand, and struck the animal a blow on the head with his stick. The fierce nature of the beast was roused by this attack; he shook his mane violently, and springing upon the child seized him round the middle and carried him off.

At this terrible sight the poor mother fell on her knees in an agony of despair. She instinctively sought the aid of the Mother of Mercy; and seeing before her the Carmelite church, where was established the celebrated Confraternity of the Scapular, in which the most distinguished citizens of Brussels were enrolled, she ran straightway into it, and throwing herself at the feet of the image of our Lady of Mount Carmel, cried out in the agony of her feelings, "O Mary, our Lady of Mount Carmel, I give you my child. Save him, I beseech you, from the lion's jaw, and he shall be consecrated to you for ever." Scarcely had the prayer been pronounced when the lion suddenly became calm, dropped the child on the ground, and quietly pursued his way.

Daniel Pinus, as soon as he was old enough, gladly fulfilled the vow of his mother, and consecrated himself to the service of our Lady of Mount Carmel, to whom he owed his remarkable preservation. The parents of the child, in order to commemorate the event, presented to the church a magnificent painting, on which the story was depicted, with this inscription, "*De ore leonis libera nos, Domine*"—"From the jaw of the lion deliver us, O Lord."

 23.

CHARITY OF A MOTHER TOWARDS THE MURDERER
OF HER SON.

St. Francis de Sales relates a story he heard at Padua as having happened in that city. The students

of the university were in the habit of wandering about the streets at night armed, which not unfrequently led to most fatal results. On one occasion, two friends agreed to pass the night in this manner. It was arranged between them that each should keep to his own side of the street. They met, however, accidentally, without recognising each other, in the darkness; they quarrelled and fought, and in the struggle one of them was killed. The survivor took shelter in the house of his friend's mother, and, after telling her what had happened, implored her to save him from the consequences of his crime. She concealed him in a private apartment; and no sooner had she done so than the body of her son was brought home. She instantly knew that he whom she sheltered was the murderer of her child; and, seeking him out, she said, weeping, "Ah, wretched man, what has my poor boy done to you, that you should have murdered him so cruelly?" Learning then for the first time that it was his own intimate friend that he had killed, he began to lament and to tear his hair; and instead of asking the mother to protect him, he, on the contrary, besought her to deliver him up to justice, as he had no other desire than to suffer the just penalty of his crime. She was so moved by the sorrow of the young man, that she assured him, that if he would ask pardon of Almighty God, and promise to change his mode of life, she would do all that lay in her power to protect and save him. Such charitable and Christian conduct in a mother so severely tried is indeed beyond all praise.

24.

ANOTHER INSTANCE OF THE SAME.

A noble lady of Gaeta, in Italy, whose son had been cruelly murdered, is worthy of being cited as an example of Christian forgiveness. As soon as the magistrates were aware of the crime that had been per-

petrated, they caused all the gates of the town to be shut, and gave every necessary order to prevent the escape of the murderer. The wretched criminal, terrified at the thought of the dreadful punishment which awaited him if he were taken, sought in vain for some safe place of concealment. But the only spot, as it occurred to him, in which he could hope to escape detection, was the house of his victim, and thither he betook himself for refuge. The mother of the murdered man was living in it, and received at one and the same time the sad intelligence of her son's death, and information that his assassin was in her power. But under her own roof she felt bound to aid him, and caused him to be conveyed to a place of concealment within the house. Some time afterwards, she sent for him, and reproached him mildly for his crime; but assured him of her forgiveness, and even provided him with money to assist him in his flight, and enable him to escape pursuit.

25.

ST. MARTIN, BISHOP OF TOURS.

During a long and dreary march in the depth of winter, which St. Martin, while yet a soldier living in the world, was making at the head of his troops, the cold became so intense that many died merely from exposure to the weather. At last, as with thankful heart and weary steps he entered the gates of Amiens, a wretched being, almost naked, supplicated his charity in the most importunate manner. It occurred to St. Martin, that, as hundreds of people must have passed through the gate before him without assisting a fellow-creature in such evident distress,—for some reason Almighty God intended that he should be relieved by him. The possibility of turning a deaf ear to a suffering brother was never contemplated by him for a moment; his only doubt was as to how he could most effectually relieve him, for he literally possessed nothing but his sword and

the garments he wore. For a moment he stood silent in the utmost perplexity, when a thought suggested itself to him upon which he immediately acted. He unclasped his cloak, and cut it through with his sword; then bestowing half of it on the poor man, and wrapping the remainder as well as he could about him, he hastily turned away. He little heeded the loud laugh of derision which resounded on all sides, although some among the crowd bitterly reproached themselves that they had spared nothing out of their abundance, and, filled with admiration for the generous act of the noble soldier, carried to their homes a lesson never to be forgotten. St. Martin was rewarded for his self-denial and charity; for the same night, in a dream, it was vouchsafed to him to see his Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ covered with that half of his cloak which he had given to the beggar; and he heard Jesus say to the angels who surrounded Him, "Martin, as yet a catechumen, has covered Me with this cloak."

Many years after this event, when he was consecrated bishop, he directed all his efforts to the destruction of idolatry and superstition. He demolished the heathen temples often at the peril of his life, and with his own hand cut down the trees to which idolatrous honour was paid. One day, after watching the demolition of a very ancient temple, he would have cut down a lofty pine which grew before it; but this the priests and some of their votaries violently opposed. At last they said, "If thou hast confidence in thy God, we will ourselves hew down this tree, and do thou receive it as it falls; if thy Lord is with thee, no harm will happen to thee." Martin accepted the condition, and let himself be bound and placed on the side towards which the tree inclined. A great crowd had assembled; and even the monks who were with him trembled for him. For himself, he remained motionless; and now the tree was loudly crackling and tottering to its fall, when, just as to the eyes of the beholders it seemed as if it must inevitably crush the saint, he calmly raised

his hand, made the sign of the Cross, and the heavy timber, as though it had suddenly encountered a mighty blast of wind, swerved and fell in the contrary direction. A loud cry burst from the whole assembly; nor was there one in all that vast multitude who did not offer himself on the spot to be instructed by the holy bishop in the faith.

26.

THE REFORM OF LA TRAPPE.

The Abbey of La Trappe, which has in later times been considered a perfect example of monastic discipline, was at the end of the seventeenth century held merely as a benefice by the celebrated Abbé de Rancé, whose conduct before his conversion was as irregular as it was afterwards edifying. Descended from a noble family, possessed of all the advantages which attach to wealth and talent, and courted by the world, he gave himself up to a life of indolence and luxury, in which state he would probably have died, had not God been pleased to recall him to a sense of his duty, by preserving him several times, almost miraculously, from the most imminent dangers.

One circumstance that most impressed him was the following. He was one day shooting with a companion on the banks of the Seine; the conversation was of that irreligious nature then fashionable in the capital, when a shot from a neighbouring copse struck De Rancé on the side. On examination, the ball was found to have flattened itself against the steel-buckle of his shooting-pouch. Touched by so visible a mark of the Divine protection, he exclaimed, "O my God, what would have become of me hadst Thou not had compassion on me!"

It is also related, that, after the circumstance just mentioned, he was returning to the residence of the Duchess de Montbuzen (his intimacy with whom was

at least of an equivocal character), not having seen her for some days, owing to his absence in the country. It was late in the evening; and when he came to the door of the house, to his surprise he found it closed, and apparently deserted. Alarmed at such an unusual occurrence, he went round to a postern through which he had been in the habit of gaining admittance, and ascended a small private staircase which led to the lady's apartments. At the top was a small chamber, where the duchess was accustomed to receive her most confidential friends. Wishing to give her an agreeable surprise, De Rancé tapped softly at the door, and hearing no sound, he opened it slowly and went in. She was indeed there, but—it was in her coffin. She had been carried off by the small-pox after a short illness; and the dread of contagion was such, that neither friend nor attendant would remain near her. The undertaker was the only one who had ventured to approach her remains; yet so hastily and carelessly was even his task performed, that, finding the coffin too short, he had severed the head from the trunk to make room for the body. The head itself was placed on a dish, the blood clotted upon it, the teeth firmly set, and the lips drawn back, as if she had expired in great agony; her features, once so beautiful, were now disfigured by the ravages of the frightful disease; the face was turned towards the door of the apartment, and was the first sight that presented itself to De Rancé as he entered. There, on her neglected bier, lay the mutilated corpse of Mary of Bretagne. * * *

De Rancé hurried away to his green fields and unny lawns at Veratz. He wished to bury himself in the shade of his forest-trees, and recover his peace of mind in silence and alone. He wandered about in his gardens amid sweet-smelling flowers, and shrubs fragrant with the odours of far-off lands; he took long walks in the woods and fields around: but a spirit was evoked which would not suffer him to be at rest; whithersoever he turned, that countenance, so sad, so horrible,

cast its reproachful look upon him, and, calling up many a remembrance of other days, seemed to accuse him as the author of its ruin. Once he left his bed, after a sleepless night, and went out to cool his fevered brow in the fresh morning air. After a short walk, he was returning by the avenue which led to the front of the house, when suddenly he beheld the basement story wrapped in flames. A ruddy glow lit up the entire front of the building, as if a considerable portion were already consumed. Astonished and confounded, he rushed towards the house. The blaze, by some strange influence, seemed to sink and die away as he approached, and at a short distance assumed the appearance of a pool of fire, on which a female form lay floating, half enveloped in the liquid flame. It needed but a glance to tell him who that female was.

Terrified at the judgments of God, his soul was at length humbled before Him, and he resolved to return to Him by a sincere repentance. Veratz, once so delightful a residence, now became insupportable; its magnificence was revolting to him: the furniture, which every where sparkled with silver and gold, the gorgeous beds, the rooms hung with pictures of rare value, the gardens so exquisitely laid out, were a burden and a torment to him. He resolved on reforming every thing: for his former sumptuous table he substituted the strictest frugality; he dismissed the greater part of his servants, gave up hunting, and denied himself even the most innocent amusements. He devoted himself to prayer, meditation, and works of charity, entirely supporting at his own expense four or five hundred poor persons. This mode of life drew upon him much animadversion. It was said that disappointed ambition, and even hypocrisy, were the motives of his conduct; but although heretofore extremely sensitive where his reputation was concerned, he persevered, regardless of the opinion of the world. He sold his patrimonial estates for a very large sum, which he gave to the general hospital of Paris; and having resigned all

his benefices, with the exception of the Abbey of La Trappe, which was of small value, he retired thither to pass the remainder of his days in exercises of penance.

The monastery itself was in a most dilapidated condition: day and night the gates were open; males and females were indiscriminately admitted to the cloisters. The entrance-hall was so dark and filthy, that it was more like a prison than a house consecrated to God. Access was had to the several stories by a ladder placed against the walls; and the boards and joists of the floor were broken and worm-eaten in many places. The roof of the cloister had fallen in, and was hanging down, so that the least shower of rain deluged the place with water; the very pillars that supported it were bent; and as for the parlour, it had for some time been used as a stable. The refectory was such only in name; the monks and their visitors played at nine-pins or shuttlecock in it when the heat or the inclemency of the weather prevented them from doing so out of doors. The dormitory was utterly deserted; it was tenanted only by the birds at night; and the hail and the snow, the wind and the rain, went in and out at pleasure. The monks took up their quarters as they pleased, or as they could. The church was not better cared for,—the pavement was broken, and the stones thrown about; the very walls were crumbling to decay; the belfry threatened to come down every moment; it shook alarmingly at every ringing of the bell. In short, the house, and all belonging to it, was but the ruin of a monastic establishment. The inmates had dwindled down to seven, and had completely lost the spirit of their rule. The very name of reform was hateful to them; and they threatened De Rancé with their direst vengeance if he attempted to introduce the slightest change. At length he persuaded them to accept a pension for their lives, and retire from the monastery. He then brought six monks from the Abbey of Perseigne, where the rule was strictly observed, and he

lived in community with them, practising all their devotions and austerities.

Finally, he himself received the habit, and courageously went through his noviciate at Perseigne, notwithstanding the frequent illnesses which God sent him in order to prove his constancy. On his return to La Trappe, he did his utmost to maintain the spirit of the rule; and by the force of his example, and the unction of his words, succeeded in re-establishing in the monastery that fervour, and the practice of those austerities, for which it has been ever since so remarkable.

27.

MADAME ALEXANDRE AND THE ROBBER.

A pious lady of Montpellier made it a rule never to refuse alms to a poor person. The consequence was, that her door was besieged with crowds of beggars; and though she had nothing to depend upon but the profits of a very small business in which she was engaged, she always contrived to have something to spare for those who were in want. One day, as she was travelling through a wood, accompanied by a servant, towards a neighbouring village, whither she was going to visit one of her friends, she was stopped by an armed man, who seized hold of her mule's bridle, and demanded her money or her life. The good lady felt no alarm on her own account; but her heart was touched with compassion for the unhappy man. Fixing her eyes intently upon him, she thus addressed him: "You must indeed be reduced to great distress thus to provoke the anger of God, as well as the vengeance of human laws. I would that it were in my power to make it worth your while to abandon your unrighteous trade; but, alas, I have but eighteen francs, which I had laid by for the expenses of my journey: nevertheless you are wel-

come to them ; see, here they are, take them." While she was speaking, the robber looked steadfastly at her ; and, as he thought he recognised her, was determined to ascertain whether she was deceiving him or not. He therefore put several questions to her as to her name, her place of abode, and her occupation. No sooner had she replied to all his inquiries than he exclaimed, " O wretch that I am ! never have I asked your alms in vain ! For several years past you have befriended me ; and now I have been on the very point of injuring you. But indeed I did not recognise you. Robber as I am, I am not such a monster as to attack one so charitable and kind as you are to the poor and afflicted. Go, madam ; keep your money, and pursue your journey ; I will escort you through the wood, and will defend you with my life." On hearing such language from the lips of a robber, Madame Alexandre was moved with pity for the man's miserable condition, and earnestly endeavoured to impress him with a sense of his danger, suggesting to him all the motives which she considered likely to induce him to change his mode of life. She offered him the eighteen francs she had in her possession ; but the robber rejected them, knowing that she required them for her journey. At length, however, he took nine francs, which she threw to him as he passed out of the wood. Madame Alexandre related this story herself, not from any feeling of vanity, but simply in order to prove, from her own experience, how charity can soften the hardest and roughest natures.

28.

CHARITY OF ST. FRANCIS DE SALES.

St. Francis de Sales, when Bishop of Geneva, gave alms to an extent which appears almost incredible, when we consider the scanty revenues of his see. Forgetful of the necessary expenditure of his household, he was

so lavish of his bounty, that his steward lost all patience, and in a state of exasperation declared that he must quit a service where he was so often left without any funds to draw upon. "You are right," was the reply of the saint on one such occasion; "I own myself incorrigible; and what is worse, there is every chance of my remaining so." Then, pointing to a crucifix, "Is there any thing," said he, "that we could find it in our heart to refuse to the suffering members of a God who has reduced Himself to this condition for us?"

29.

M. DE TILLET, BISHOP OF ORANGE.

As M. de Tillet, Bishop of Orange, was one day walking alone through his episcopal town, his compassion was excited by the piercing cries of a child, proceeding apparently from a neighbouring shop. He entered, and seeing an infant in its cradle, who was sobbing piteously at being left alone, he endeavoured to console it by kind words and caresses. Finding these, however, ineffectual, the good prelate sat down by the child, and began to rock its cradle, which he continued to do for a short time, until the mother returned. The latter, on her entrance, was much surprised at finding a stranger thus occupied; but when she perceived the episcopal cross, and the violet cassock of the bishop, she could only throw herself at his feet, exclaiming, "Is it possible, my lord, that you can condescend to rock my child's cradle?" "And why should I not?" said M. de Tillet. "As I was passing, I heard the poor little thing crying, and seemingly in great distress; and I only regret that my efforts as a nurse have not been more successful. Watch over this child," added he; "bring it up in the love and fear of God, that it may one day conduce to His honour and glory, and to your happiness." Then, bestowing his blessing

on the child, he departed, before the mother could find words to express her gratitude.

30.

ST. ELIZABETH AND THE PAGE.

The following incident is related in the life of St. Elizabeth of Portugal. Her charity towards the poor was so great, that, independently of the general order which she gave her almoner, never to refuse assistance to any one, she was continually engaged in relieving their wants, either personally or through her servants. She visited the sick, served them, and dressed and kissed their most loathsome sores. Her husband was possessed of many natural good qualities; but he was a lover of pleasure and of the world, and defiled the sanctity of the nuptial state with abominable licentiousness. Now, there was a page, a pious and faithful youth, whom Elizabeth employed, after her usual manner, in distributing secret alms. A fellow-page, envying the distinction shown him by the queen, treacherously insinuated to the king that a criminal understanding existed between his wife and her confidential servant. The prince, whose depraved and sensual conduct readily inclined him to judge ill of others, gave credit to the slander, and resolved to take away the life of the innocent youth. Accordingly, as he was one day passing by a lime-kiln, he called to him the man who had charge of the furnace, and told him that on the morrow he would send a page who would inquire "whether he had obeyed the king's commands?" and that he should instantly seize him, and cast him into the fire, for that he had justly deserved that punishment; and that his death was expedient for the king's service. On returning home, the king charged the page to deliver the message early the next morning. The youth set out; but, as he was passing by a church, he heard the bell ringing for the elevation of the Adorable Host; he en-

tered, and heard the end of that mass, and afterwards a second. In the mean time, the king, anxious to know the issue, singled out, as men would say by chance, the youth who had invented the wicked calumny against the queen, and bade him go with haste to the lime-kiln, and inquire whether his orders had been executed. Scarcely had the page opened his lips when the man, supposing him to be the person of whom the king had spoken, seized him, and cast him into the burning pit. The innocent and unconscious page, having satisfied his devotion, proceeded on his way to deliver his message; and having received an answer in the affirmative, returned without delay to tell the king that his commands had been obeyed. The king, astonished at the sight of his intended victim, and still more at the answer of which he was the bearer, inquired wherefore he had been so long in returning? The ingenuous youth excused himself by saying, that his father had charged him, on his deathbed, whenever he heard the bell ring for the elevation, to go into the church, and not depart till the mass was ended; and that, as it was his custom to hear mass every day, he had remained for the one that followed. The king, hearing this simple narrative from the lips of the pious youth, dismissed at once his unworthy suspicions, and adored the Divine judgments which had preserved the innocent and punished the guilty. He ever after respected the great virtue and sanctity of his queen; and, moved by her example, it was not long before, by the mercy of God, he repented of his evil courses, and wholly reformed his life.

31.

EXPLOIT OF A SPANISH KNIGHT.

At the siege of Grenada, the brave Fernando Perez del Pulgar, by the aid of stealth and force combined, penetrated, with fifteen companions, into the city at

dead of night. Leaving his comrades to maintain the skirmish with the astonished Moors at the gate by which he had entered, he galloped at full speed through the streets, until he reached the principal mosque, where he leapt from his horse, and, throwing himself on his knees, took possession of it in the name of Christ; in testimony whereof, he, with his dagger, affixed to the door a tablet which he had brought with him, and on which was inscribed in large letters, "*Ave Maria.*" This done, he forced his way through the crowds of soldiers whom the alarm had collected, and who vainly strove to prevent his escape, rejoined his companions, who were still fighting at the gate, and with them returned in safety to the camp.

The mosque, thus consecrated, as it were, by the courageous devotion of a Christian knight, was eventually, on the capture of the city, converted into a cathedral; and in commemoration of his gallant exploit, Fernando del Pulgar enjoyed the right of sepulture in that church, and the privilege of sitting in the choir during High Mass. Like many other knights, he was a man of learning as well as a warrior, and inscribed to Charles V. a summary of the achievements of Gonsalvo of Cordova, surnamed the Great Captain, who had been one of his companions in arms.

32.

THE POOR MAN AND THE MISSIONER.

There was a poor man who had lived for twenty years in great poverty, but though he had often been nearly destitute, and seen his six children around him crying for food, still his trust in the Divine Providence remained unshaken; and he believed that in his own good time God would hear his prayers, and succour him in his distress. A celebrated preacher gave a retreat during Lent that year, and crowds flocked to

listen to him. His words created a great sensation among his hearers; and a gentleman, personally unknown to him, came to the missionary at the conclusion of one of his discourses, and said, "Father, I wish to do a work of mercy, and would leave the execution of it to you. Here are a thousand crowns which I should be glad if you would distribute among those who are really in want."

"You must excuse me," replied the preacher; "I cannot undertake the office. You must be better acquainted with the poor in this neighbourhood than I can be; and besides, if it were known that I was able to give large alms, I should be so incessantly persecuted by beggars that it would be a hindrance to my ministrations." But the gentleman was so urgent in his solicitations that at length the good father was reluctant to refuse, and begged him to explain exactly in what way he would like the money to be spent.

"That is to me a matter of indifference," replied the gentleman; "but to simplify the business, it will perhaps be as well to give it to the first poor person who comes to you: we may then believe that Providence has directed the disposition of the money."

The next day the preacher took for his text this passage of Holy Scripture, "Never saw I the just forsaken, or his seed begging their bread." The poor man was present and heard this sermon; and as soon as it was over he came to the priest and said, "Father, your sermons have been very instructive, and I have derived great consolation from many of them; but I find a difficulty in believing all you have said to-day. In my own case the words certainly have not come true; for I have tried to serve God and live as a Christian for twenty years, and yet I am very poor and almost destitute, and have nothing to leave to my six children but poverty and misery. I have trusted and prayed and hoped all this time fruitlessly; I cannot see what will become of us; even my faith at times is sorely tried."

“Well, my child,” replied the priest, “then you yourself shall be a living proof of the truth of the Psalmist’s words. Here are a thousand crowns, which were but just now placed in my hands with a direction to bestow them on the first poor man who should apply to me for relief; you may therefore consider them as a gift sent to you by Almighty God.”

The poor man, transported with joy and gratitude, hastened home to acquaint his family with the mercy that had been vouchsafed to them; and they all united in thanksgiving to God who had so wonderfully helped them in their extremity, and in prayer for their unknown benefactor who had been the instrument of His bounty.

33.

ST. JULIANA’S VIATICUM.

St. Juliana was upwards of seventy years of age, and worn out by severe penances, by fasts, scourgings, watchings, and prayer, so that she could no longer receive or retain food. When she saw that she was thus deprived of the most holy viaticum of the Body of Christ, she was greatly afflicted, and shed tears. Then she most humbly begged her director, Father James Campo Real, to bring the Most Holy Sacrament, that she might at least gaze upon her Lord. Her request was granted. As soon as the priest appeared bearing the Blessed Sacrament, she, despite her exceeding weakness, threw herself upon the ground, extending her arms in the form of a cross, and adored her God. At that moment her pallid countenance, emaciated by her long and painful sickness, recovered its colour and beauty, so that her face seemed like that of an angel, and on it was expressed that intense desire which she had to feed upon this Heavenly Bread. Then she entreated the minister of God to bring the Divine Jesus so near that she might at least gratify herself by giving

Him a humble kiss; and when the priest would not consent, she begged him to place the sacred particle on her breast, that her heart might receive some refreshment from its vicinity to Jesus, with whom it so earnestly desired to be united. Her tears, and the affecting manner in which she asked this favour, and, above all things, the knowledge he had of her many and great virtues, and of the love which inflamed her, induced her director to grant her this last request; and accordingly a veil was spread over her bosom, and after that, the corporal on which he placed the Adorable Host. Scarcely had he laid it on her burning heart, when, languishing with love and collecting the small remnant of her strength, she said, "O my sweet Jesus!" and with the words upon her lips, as if she were rapt in an ecstasy, she sweetly and smilingly expired. But, O marvellous miracle! as she drew her last breath, the Most Sacred Host disappeared, and was no where to be found; so that they who were present believed that, as Jesus under the sacramental veils had comforted her in her passage, so He accompanied her to heaven, there to crown her with the two diadems of virginity and martyrdom, for which she had suffered in her long and painful illness. After her death, a sign in the form of a seal, which bore the image of Christ crucified after the manner of the Host, was found imprinted in the flesh around her heart; "a very evident mark," says her biographer, "how dear to the saint, while living, was the memory of the Passion of Jesus, that she merited by her deep contemplations to have her body signed even after death with the sign of man's redemption."

34.

OUR LADY AD NIVES.

One of the three patriarchal churches at Rome, St. Mary Major (so designated because both in antiquity

and in dignity the first among those dedicated to the Holy Mother of God), is called also St. Mary *ad Nives*; the origin of which title tradition thus assigns.

In the time of Pope Liberius there lived in Rome a devout Christian, of patrician rank, whose name was John. Having no children, he and his wife had made a vow to Mary to consecrate their fortune to the accomplishment of some work which she should choose. Every day they failed not to pray her to make known to them her wishes; when, lo, in the very heat of summer, on the nones of August (Aug. 5th), during the night, part of the Esquiline Hill was covered with snow. At the same time the Blessed Virgin appeared in a dream to the patrician John and to Pope Liberius. On the morrow, in obedience to her injunctions, the Pope and the patrician proceeded solemnly to the Esquiline, and traced the outline of a church on the ground, which was still white from the miraculous fall of snow. The church, thus founded and endowed, was consecrated about the year 435 by Sixtus III., the then reigning pontiff.

The same basilica is known also by the name of St. Mary *ad Præsepe*, from the holy crib, or manger of Bethlehem, in which Christ was laid in His nativity. This most sacred relic, enclosed in a case of massive silver, is kept in a sumptuous subterranean chapel, and is exposed to the devotion of the faithful on Christmas-day.

35.

CONVERSION OF A JANSENIST.

Of all the favours (writes the Abbé Desgenettes) obtained through the invocation of the most holy and immaculate Heart of Mary, the following conversion is one of the most wonderful which has come to my knowledge. On Sunday, the 4th of June 1837, I received a letter written by a stranger, who was ill in an hotel in my parish, asking me to go and visit him. I

went accordingly; and was deeply struck with the appearance of the sick man. He was upwards of sixty years of age, and the head of one of the noblest families in France. He had come to Paris from a distant province for medical advice. His stomach was in such a state that it could not retain any food; his skin, which was as yellow as saffron, barely covered his bones—in fact, he was a living skeleton. I was astonished to find him sitting in an arm-chair in this deplorable condition. He had the full use of all his intellectual powers; and received me with the politeness of a courtier, begging me to excuse him for putting me to so much inconvenience; he added that, as his end was approaching, he wished to settle his affairs, and to ask my advice upon some points.

When we had finished these matters, I said to him, “You live in my parish; allow me, therefore, to ask you whether, in your present critical situation, you have settled the affairs of your conscience with God?”

“I understand you, M. le curé,” said he; “I am a Christian. I have kept my faith; and for that very reason I cannot make use of the helps which you propose to me.”

“What do you mean?” I said. “You have faith, and you refuse to implore the mercy of God!”

“Yes,” he replied, “I have faith; and it is because I believe in the greatness, the holiness, and the justice of God, that I am convinced it is impossible for me to obtain His pardon for the sins of my life. I regret that I ever committed them; I know the inevitable fate that awaits me—I have long foreseen it.”

“O,” I exclaimed, “what dreadful thoughts! how injurious to the goodness of God! You are indeed most miserable. What! can you bear to see the eternal abyss open under your feet, and live on in the fatal certainty that you will never escape it? This is giving yourself up knowingly to the most terrible of all torments. Where have you learnt such doctrines?”

He replied, “I have not always entertained these

notions. During the greater part of my life, my mind has been diverted from the subject by the dissipations of youth, the serious occupations of manhood, and my own impetuous and violent passions. I have only reflected seriously for the last few years; and by calling to mind the religious principles in which I was brought up, and comparing them with my course of life, I have come to the conclusion that, being unable to satisfy the justice of God, I must expect to suffer the consequences during that eternity in which I firmly believe. You ask where I have learnt this doctrine: I acquired it in my early youth. I was educated in a college directed by the Oratorians.* They had themselves the reputation of being tainted with Jansenism; but my own special master, a secular priest, was a decided Jansenist, and a man of extremely rigid principles and tenets. He delayed my first communion until I was fifteen. Up to that time I was innocent, notwithstanding the natural levity of my age; but I had reached a very critical period of life. My mother complained of this delay, and I myself began to feel ashamed of it. The revolution soon broke out; and the priests who refused to take the oath to the constitution were to be sent into exile. My mother now insisted that my master should prepare me as soon as possible. For three months he gave me daily instructions, which always turned on the severity of God's judgments and the frightful consequences of a sacrilegious communion. God knows with what terror I performed the great act, and the impression it left on my mind. I believed, and I have always believed, firmly in the Real Presence of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament. My religion tells me that to communicate worthily requires perfect dispositions, and that the result must be a perfect life; but my life has been far from perfect. I left college some months after my

* The French Oratory instituted by Cardinal Bérulle, which at its commencement produced such excellent fruits, but which was finally suppressed on account of its Jansenistic leaven, must not be confounded with the Oratory founded by St. Philip Neri.

first communion, when I emigrated. The wandering life I led, and the bad examples which surrounded me, developed all my passions; I gave up every religious practice, and spent my life in sensual indulgence. For some years I have tried to return to God. I have recalled the instructions of my youth; and I only see in God an angry Judge, who will punish me for having offended Him. It is in vain to try to appease Him, because I know that His justice is inexorable."

The perfect calmness with which the unfortunate man spoke showed me that these notions were the effect of a systematic state of despair. I tried to suggest other thoughts to him; I spoke to him of the mercy of God, and of the protection of the Blessed Virgin. All was in vain: he calmly replied, "I thank you, M. le curé, for the interest you take in me; but it is of no use. I have reflected seriously on all this; I know what I must expect, and I have made up my mind."

There was no more to be done, so I took my leave of him, asking permission to return again. He said he should take it as an honour; but he begged me not to speak further on the subject of our late conversation, because it would be "to torment him to no purpose." I replied, "I consent, since you wish it; but I do not leave you without hope. An association of pious persons meets every Sunday evening in my church to implore the mercy of God for sinners; I shall recommend you to their prayers, and I hope they will obtain for you the grace to return to better dispositions."

I went home with a sad and anxious heart: I had never met with so hardened a sinner. In the evening I recommended him to the prayers of the confraternity. We prayed together; and the next morning I received the following letter:

"M. le Curé,—Accept my apology and my regrets for all I said yesterday that caused you pain. I was then in the very worst dispositions: I could not have spoken otherwise than I did. But to-day what a change has been wrought in me! I believe, I hope in the

mercy of God. Come and finish the work you have begun, and speak to me those words of peace which I rejected yesterday with such deplorable obstinacy. Next to the infinitely merciful God you will be my saviour."

Astonished at this blessed change, I immediately went to him. He told me that about two o'clock in the morning a complete and unaccountable change had come over his mind; that he called to remembrance the words of mercy and pardon which I had spoken to him; and that after some minutes his heart became filled with thoughts of hope and confidence in God's mercy, when he felt an interior calm and peace which he had never before experienced, and a deep sorrow for his past sins. He begged me to hear his confession immediately. According as he proceeded in his confession, the grace of the sacrament was poured into his heart, and his confidence increased in proportion to his repentance. He blessed and thanked God for having, as he said, "rescued him from hell." His whole countenance, before so stern, breathed an air of calmness; his manner had become gentle and affectionate, and even his bodily sufferings were lessened. He was himself surprised at the difference in him. "I no longer know myself," he said. "I, who was always so irritable, now enjoy a peace I have never before known. I repent with all my heart of the iniquities of my whole life; but I am tranquil, because I have entire confidence in God's mercy."

He had the happiness to receive communion a week before his death. He no longer regarded that holy act with dread; and his faith told him of all the graces and blessings which he would derive from his Saviour's presence. His faith, repentance, and love for God were sensibly rewarded; hardly had he received Jesus Christ within his breast, when he felt an increase of heavenly graces. From that moment he only thought of his approaching end, for which he prepared himself with admirable calmness and resignation. On the 26th of June, finding him very weak, I proposed that he should

receive the last Sacraments. He replied, "Yes, I think it is time; for I am in a state of great exhaustion. After this grace I shall present myself with confidence at my Saviour's feet, saying, 'Lord, behold the stray sheep which Thou hast brought back from the desert; have pity on him, and show him Thy mercy.' I wish my sons to be present at the holy rite, and I shall send for them now."

At eleven o'clock I administered the Sacraments to him. He was quite calm, but so weak that he no longer seemed to feel his sufferings; he was in the full possession of his faculties, answered all my questions clearly, and begged pardon of his wife and three sons for the scandal he had given them by his religious indifference; he then earnestly besought his children to follow his example in returning to God, and gave them his blessing. I left him at noon, after having said the prayers for the agonising.

After I had left he spoke for a few moments with his family, and said to them that, as he had lived separated from God all his life, he felt that he ought to profit by the presence of Jesus in his heart to converse with his Saviour; that, as his hour was drawing near, he wished only to think of God and his soul; so he bade them farewell, and asked them to join with him in prayer, and not to distract him any further. He clasped his hands, closed his eyes, and remained motionless for more than three hours. One might have thought that he was dead, but that his lips continued to move in prayer, and that at intervals he opened his eyes to gaze on the crucifix opposite. At three o'clock he breathed his last.

36.

THE PRIEST'S RIDE.

It was a cold winter night; the wind blew a hurricane, and the rain beat violently against the windows;

the moon every now and then burst forth from behind some black cloud, making the darkness of the night only more perceptible, when a loud knocking was heard at the door of the priest's house at A——. The chapel, to which the house was attached, was situated on the borders of a large forest. No one in the house seemed to hear the knocking except the priest, who rose to open the door, and inquire the cause of the disturbance at such a late hour of the night. On opening it he was addressed by a stranger on horseback, who was leading another horse ready saddled and bridled. In answer to his inquiries, he was told that a severe accident had happened to a gentleman, who could not be removed out of a barn, whither he had been carried, and that he was anxious to receive the last sacraments. The priest prepared immediately to accompany the stranger, of whose personal appearance, in the hurry of the moment, he took but little notice. They rode on and on; not following the highroad, but traversing fields and bypaths, and that at a speed which astonished the good priest; all obstacles seemed to give way before them, and they cleared the ground in a manner which he could not understand. Not a word was spoken, save that now and then the priest would ask if they had much farther to go, and always received the same reply, that the distance was not great. At length they arrived at the place; the priest entered the barn, and found every thing as he had been told; he heard the dying man's confession, gave him the last sacraments, and immediately returned with the stranger. They retraced their steps in the same fashion; and much did the priest wonder where the place could have been, as he had no recollection of having ever seen it before. On reaching home and dismounting from his horse, he looked round for his companion, but the stranger had disappeared. The priest entered his house; on his table he found a supper prepared, at which he was surprised, because he thought that no one was aware of his having left home. After refreshing himself he retired to rest;

and in the morning inquired of his servant how she had known of his absence, so as to prepare his supper. Amazed at his question, she replied that she had neither known of his absence nor had prepared any supper for him. The priest, only the more perplexed, inquired of every one whether any thing was known of an accident having occurred in the neighbourhood; but all his inquiries were in vain, no one knew any thing about it. After a little while he chanced to read in the newspapers that an accident had happened, and that a stranger had died in a barn, upwards of a hundred miles away from his own residence, in the direction in which he had taken his mysterious ride. Then he knew that it was an angel that had fetched him; and he blessed God for His mercy in thus taking charge of His children.

37.

MARTYRDOM OF ST. PHOCAS.

St. Phocas was a gardener at Sinope, in Pontus; and to his simple profession united the practice of all the virtues of the austere anchorite. His garden was another Eden, in which he lived and laboured, away from the throng of men, in innocence and peace. Small as it was, its produce sufficed to support himself and many of his poor neighbours. His house was always open to strangers and travellers; and as it was close upon the gate of the town, and was well known, he had many applicants for his bounty. His hospitality met with a glorious reward.

A violent persecution of the Christians arose in the country, and even Phocas's simple and inoffensive life could not secure him against the rancorous hatred of the enemies of the faith; he was denounced as a disciple of Jesus Christ. Soldiers were despatched to seize him, with orders to put him to death without proof of complicity or the formality of a trial. The men who were sent on

this errand had no knowledge of his person, and by chance begged for a lodging at his house, where they were kindly received. They had made no one acquainted with their purpose; and their intention was to obtain from the people a description of their intended victim, and information as to his abode; little imagining that he whom they sought was in the midst of them, as an innocent lamb among wolves. The men were charmed with their host's friendly courtesy, and, feeling confidence in his discretion, disclosed to him during supper the nature of the errand on which they had been sent. "We are come," they said, "in search of a man named Phocas, a zealous Christian; and our orders are to put him to death wherever we find him. You will be conferring a real favour upon us if you can assist us in our search, or tell us where we are likely to meet with him." The faithful servant of God listened calmly to the fatal announcement, betraying neither surprise nor alarm. The thought of escape never so much as occurred to him, though he had every facility for flight: he only answered mildly and without hesitation, "I will manage that for you; I am well acquainted with the man, and you may depend upon my giving you certain intelligence of him in the morning."

After they had retired to rest, the saint employed the night in preparing himself for his end; he then dug his own grave, and made all things ready for his burial. When it was day, he went to the soldiers, and said, "I have fulfilled my promise: Phocas is in your power; all that remains for you is to seize him." Rejoiced at this intelligence, they inquired eagerly, "Where is he, then?" "He is not far off," replied the host; "for he stands before you; I am Phocas." Struck with astonishment at an answer so unexpected, and still more with admiration at his undaunted resolution and composure, the soldiers stood for some time as if petrified on the spot; and when they recovered themselves, it was only to express their horror at the thought

of imbruing their hands in the blood of one who had shown them so much kindness and hospitality. But the saint said, "Hesitate not on my account. So far from fearing to die, I shall account death as the greatest boon you could confer upon me: to me it will be not only the highest possible gain, but the beginning of everlasting happiness." At these words, so strange to their ears, and uttered with an air of such perfect sincerity, their courage revived; and dreading the anger of their masters, and the punishment which disobedience would bring upon them, they did as the saint would have them, and cut off his head.

When peace was restored, the faithful of Sinope built a church, which became famous over all the east; in it were deposited the sacred relics of the martyr; and many and great miracles were wrought at his tomb.

St. Phocas became the patron saint of the mariners who navigated the Black Sea and the neighbouring waters; and it was their custom, when on board, to set aside at each meal a portion for the saint, for which one among their number would volunteer to give some small coin; and the money thus collected was distributed in alms to the poor at the first port at which they touched.

38.

DEATHBED OF QUEEN ELIZABETH.

When this ruthless persecutor of God's Church and people was in her last sickness, she was haunted by frightful visions and imaginations. She told two of her ladies that she saw one night, as she lay in her bed, her own body, exceedingly lean and frightful, in a light of fire. At length, she obstinately refused to lie down, and sat two days and three nights ready dressed, upon a stool, bolstered up with cushions, having her finger in her mouth, and her eyes fixed on the floor, seldom condescending to speak, and rejecting every kind of

nourishment. One day, being pulled up by force, she stood on her feet fifteen hours. On her growing past recovery, the council sent to her the Archbishop of Canterbury and other prelates; but at the sight of them she was much offended; and when some of the lords suggested to have others of her bishops brought to her, she answered, that she would have none of those "hedge priests." The lord-admiral was the only man who seemed to have any influence with her; he was of her own blood, and from him she consented to receive a little broth; but when he urged her to return to her bed, she replied, that if he had seen what she saw there, he would never make the request. Cecil insisted that she must go to bed, if it were only to satisfy her people. "Must!" she exclaimed; "is *must* a word to be addressed to princes? Little man, little man, thy father, if he had been alive, durst not have used that word; but thou art grown presumptuous, because thou knowest that I shall die."

One of her privy-councillors presented her with a piece of gold, dimly marked with some small characters, which he said an old woman in Wales bequeathed to him on her deathbed; telling her that the said old woman, by virtue of this talisman, lived to the age of a hundred and odd years, and could not die as long as she wore it upon her body; but, becoming withered and wanting nature to nourish her body, it was taken off, and she died. The queen thereupon, having confidence in the charm, took the piece of gold and wore it on her ruff. Two of the ladies-in-waiting discovered in the bottom of her chair the queen of hearts, with an iron nail struck through the forehead, which they durst not pull out, remembering that the like thing was reported to be used for witchcraft.

Her death was miserable in the extreme; dying as she did without sense, feeling, or mention of God. A blank despair seemed to have settled on her soul; she felt herself in the grasp of some evil thing, from which there was no escaping. Ordering all others to leave

the room, she called the lord-admiral to her, and said in a piteous tone, "My lord, I am tied with an iron collar about my neck." He tried to console her; but she replied, "No; I am tied; and the case is altered with me." These were almost the last words she uttered, ere she went to her account.

39.

ST. LOUIS IN CAPTIVITY.

After Louis IX., king of France, had acquired a great reputation for valour, and had conquered a part of the Holy Land, which he designed to deliver from the yoke of the infidels, he had the misfortune to see almost the whole of his noble army perish, and to fall himself into the hands of the barbarians, together with two of his brothers, the Counts of Anjou and Poitiers. During his imprisonment at Mausura, he never omitted to say office daily at the canonical hours, and to perform all his customary devotions, undeterred by the presence of the infidels. But his tranquillity, sweetness, and patience, as well as his firmness in rejecting demands which he considered to be exorbitant, excited their admiration; and they could not refrain from saying, "You are our captive, and yet you treat us as though it were we who were in your power." Some of the emirs declared he was the proudest Christian they had ever known. The sultan having demanded from him with threats the surrender, in addition to Damietta, of all the places which belonged to the Christians in Palestine, the king consented, so far as Damietta was concerned, which was not in a position to defend itself; but replied that, as for the other places in the Holy Land, of which the sultan desired to possess himself, they were not his to give; and therefore that the matter was not one in which he had any concern. The infidels threatened him with an instrument of torture called

44.

THE MIRACULOUS MEDAL.

The following remarkable narrative is related by Father Aspetti, Superior of the Lazarist missionaries at Florence :

In 1845 I was in Tuscany, preaching a mission in a poor parish on the heights of the Apennines. I had been there twelve days, and God had already blessed my labours. One day, about an hour before my sermon, a lady came to me in great affliction. She informed me that one of her brothers was dying—adding, that the disease of his soul was as incurable as that of his body. I asked her how long he had been confined to his bed, and whether he had expressed a wish to see a confessor. She replied, that he had been ill for four months, and that he had not been to confession; that yesterday a priest had been sent for, but that her brother had shown no sign of repentance. I asked if he was married, and how old he was. “Fifty-five,” she replied; adding, “married!”—and bursting into tears, she said, “No, Father, he is not married; he is a priest. O, have mercy on this wretched soul! Come to his aid; perhaps he may be dead before to-morrow! O, if you knew his scandalous life, his licentious habits, his dreadful blasphemies against God and the Blessed Virgin! he terrifies all who come near him. He utters the most frightful imprecations against me, because for the last four months I have endeavoured to detach him from certain connections in which he obstinately persisted, though his illness daily increased.”

Moved by the lady's entreaties, and by the account she gave of the wretched state of this poor sinner, I resolved to go, and left one of my colleagues to preach in my place. I gave a miraculous medal to the good lady, recommending her to place it round the neck of the sick man, and to begin a novena to the Pure and Immaculate Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary. I de-

posed, as they considered that it would endanger the existence of their religion, if so pious a king were to occupy the throne. They ratified the agreement which had been previously made; and nothing remained but to take the necessary oaths for its observance. At one time it seemed probable that the whole negotiation would have failed, and the king be put to death with all the prisoners; because the oath which the emirs proposed was so full of imprecations that Louis would not take it. "May God grant," said he, "that no such words as these may ever proceed from the mouth of a king of France." Addressing the Saracen whom the emirs had sent to administer the oath, he said to him, "Tell your masters that they may do as they please; but that I had rather die a good Christian than live under the displeasure of God." The emirs enraged at his answer, came to his tent with drawn swords in their hands, to compel him to take the oath. The king contented himself with simply answering with the utmost calmness, "God has made you masters of my body, but my soul is in His hands, and it is not in your power to hurt it." Finding it impossible to intimidate him, or to induce him to take so blasphemous an oath, the emirs at length gave up the point, and permitted the king to return to France, after having passed a whole month in captivity, which added more to his renown, and conferred a greater benefit on religion, than all the victories which he had gained over the infidels by the force of his arms.

40.

PIETY OF AN OLD CHINESE CHRISTIAN.

An old Chinese, who had been converted in his early youth, came one day to the priest, who had established a mission in his native village, to tell him how anxiously he desired to see a church built there before his death. "You cannot wish it more than I do, my

He survived three days, and frequently repeated his confession with floods of tears: he was sustained by a blessed hope. He begged pardon of all present for the scandal he had caused by his depraved life; he desired that all his friends should be collected around him, when he craved their forgiveness. During the last days of his life no other words escaped his lips but acts of love to that God whom he had so grievously offended; he was also full of tender devotion towards the Mother of Divine Grace, who had delivered him from the pains of hell, and vanquished the obduracy of his heart. He received the last Sacraments with much fervour, and died leaving all who were present in the assured hope of his eternal salvation.

45.

CHARITY OF A FARMER.

As a farmer was returning to his village, leading a horse which was carrying a sack of oats, he was met by one of his neighbours, who seized the horse, and holding a stick over the farmer, said in a threatening manner, "Give me that corn instantly."

The farmer, who was not easily alarmed, quickly grasped the man by the collar, and threw him down, saying, "You see, if I chose, I could kill you in a moment."

"Do kill me, then," replied the man; "it is best that I should die at once; for my wife and children are starving, and I cannot bear to see them die."

"O, if you are really in need," replied the farmer, "it is quite another matter; but there is no necessity for your turning thief. I will give you the sack; take it at once; and if you cannot carry it, I will help you. But do not let any one know of what has occurred."

When he returned home, he related his adventure to his wife, who hastily wrapped up a loaf in her apron,

and ran to take it to the wretched family. This unexpected compassion roused all the good feeling that had lain dormant in the heart of the poor man; and taking encouragement and hope for the future, he used every effort to redeem his character, and to give his children a moral and religious education. How many wretched beings have been urged on to crime by want and misery! and how many might have been led into a better path, if they had met with a feeling heart and friendly hand to assist them out of the abyss of wretchedness into which they have fallen!

46.

ST. FELIX AND THE SPIDER.

St. Felix was ordained priest by Maximus, Bishop of Nola. During the Decian persecution Maximus escaped from the city; not that he feared death, but that he would not tempt God, and wished to preserve himself for the service of his flock. Felix was seized and cruelly scourged; he was then loaded with bolts and chains about his neck, hands, and legs, and thrown into a dungeon, the floor of which was strewn with potsherds and pieces of broken glass. The bishop had fled into the desert, and was suffering all the pains of famine, aggravated by his advanced age and all the sorrow and distress of mind which he experienced on account of his flock. But God did not forsake him. In the dead of the night an angel appeared to Felix in his prison. When first he heard the angel's voice, and beheld the brilliant light with which he was surrounded, Felix thought it had been a dream; but the angel bade him rise: his chains instantly fell off him, the gates opened of their own accord, and Felix passed between the guards as though he were invisible, and arrived by a way he knew not at the desert where Maximus was perishing of hunger. He found the old man lying

prostrate on the ground, stiff and cold, as though he had been dead; he had already lost all consciousness, nor was there the slightest motion indicative of life except the faintest breathing. Unable to render him any assistance, Felix had recourse to prayer; when, looking up, he saw a bunch of grapes hanging from a bramble-bush, which he took and squeezed into the parched mouth of the dying man. Then the aged prelate revived a little, and, recognising Felix, he said, "You have been a long while coming, my son; but God promised me that you should bring me succour; carry me back, I pray, to my flock." Felix lifted the old man upon his shoulders, and bore him to the faithful, who were longing to behold their bishop again.

Felix kept himself concealed till the tyrant was dead; he then appeared again in public, and was occupied in instructing the people in the streets and in the public squares, as was his wont, when the pagan magistrates, exasperated by his zeal, sent to have him apprehended. The pursuivants met him in their search; but whether God had changed the countenance of Felix, or that their eyes were holden so that they could not see, they failed to recognise him, and inquired whether he had met Felix the priest. Evading their question, he passed on; but being informed that he whom they had accosted was the very man they were seeking, they almost immediately returned. Warned by the shouts of the people, Felix hid himself on the instant in a ruin which stood close by; but as the passage was open, and his enemies close upon his footsteps, he would soon have been taken, had not a spider at that moment woven a thick close web across the entrance. The pursuers, when they came up, perceiving nothing but an old wall covered with cobwebs, made no attempt to enter, knowing that Felix could not have passed through without breaking the web, and deeming it impossible that so thick a mesh could have been woven in so short a time. They therefore continued their search elsewhere; and Providence by this miracle saved the life

of the saint. Felix then hid himself in an old well, where, for six whole months, he was supported by a devout Christian woman, who was inspired by God, without knowing what she did, to place food from day to day on the brink of the well as long as the saint lay concealed in it. His drink was the dew that fell every night in a broken trough which chanced to be near, and which was miraculously supplied with as much water as sufficed to quench his thirst. When peace was restored, Felix returned to the city, where he was welcomed as one risen from the dead. On the death of Maximus the people would have made him bishop, but this his humility refused; neither would he sue to have his goods, which had been seized, restored when peace returned, but passed the rest of his days in holy poverty, supporting himself by the labour of his own hands.

47.

THE BROTHERS LEROI.

During the reign of terror in France, Peter Leroi, aged twenty-nine years, and his brother René, aged twenty-four, were both condemned to die, for having said publicly that they detested the republic, because it had robbed them of their priests and of their laws.

These two excellent young men had vowed to die a thousand deaths rather than belie their Christian profession. Laden with heavy chains, their bodily powers gave way under the galling pressure; but their souls seemed to gather fresh strength and energy in spite of all their sufferings. Such was the effect of the hardships they endured, that they both fell sick. During their illness, all their conversation was of heaven; and it seemed as if they no longer belonged to the earth, or at least no longer regarded it as their home. A holy longing for martyrdom sprang up in their hearts; and their only fear was that a natural death should rob

them of its glory. The youngest, whose constitution was the most delicate, could hardly take sufficient nourishment to support his sinking frame. "Eat! O, do eat," said his brother, "to keep up your strength; eat, that you may be able to walk to the scaffold!"

At length they were called up to Laval's tribunal.

"Your names," said the president.

"Peter and René Leroi, children of the Holy Apostolic Roman Church," they both replied, with a boldness which astonished the judges.

"Your place of residence?"

"I did not live with my brother," answered the eldest; "but I went to him to confirm him in his good resolutions."

"In what manner did you employ yourself?"

"In doing my duty, and in promoting my brother's eternal happiness."

"Brothers Leroi," added the president, "do you desire to serve the Republic?"

"Never!"

"Will you take the oath?"

"Never!"

"Will you cry '*Vive la Nation!*'"

"No."

"What, then, do you want?"

"A God to worship, a king to restore order and justice."

Answers so noble and so just produced too lively an impression on the audience to allow the judges to continue their interrogatories. They retired for a few moments into the hall of deliberation, to give a colour of legality to their iniquitous sentence, which was already pronounced in their hearts.

During this interval, a most touching incident occurred in the court, which interested all hearts in favour of the young men. The brothers were well dressed; but beside them was an accused person, who was almost naked. One of the brothers took off a portion of his own clothes to cover him. The judges entered soon after.

"Where is René Leroi?" inquired the president.

"Here I am, citizen."

"What have you done with your clothes?"

"My clothes were my own; and I gave them to cover the naked."

This beautiful act of charity did not hinder the revolutionary judges from pronouncing sentence of death against the two brothers; and no tidings could have given more satisfaction, to judge by the joyful expression of their countenances. The youngest turned to a lady who had charitably attended upon him in prison, and, clasping her hand, he said, "Ah, what a happiness!" and then, in a deep and sonorous voice, they began a holy canticle, and went singing to their death.

The father, in his prison, looked in vain to see his sons return. "My children do not come back," said he. "Your children are guillotined," was the answer. "O, is it possible," cried the old man, "that I am the father of two martyrs? O my God, what a grace!" A contagious sickness was raging in the prison: the father was attacked by it, and was dying. On the day of his death, he said to the good young lady from whom these details are derived, "I am dying; but, alas, it is not on the scaffold!"

The old man was not less a martyr, for he died in his sons; he died for his faith and for his God.

48.

CARDINAL XIMENES.

Cardinal Ximenes, when he was made Archbishop of Toledo, still maintained his usual simplicity of life; riding on an ass, as he had been in the habit of doing before his elevation, or going on foot between monks of his order. He would have no hangings on the walls of his chambers, or any sumptuous furniture; in short, such was his love of poverty, and dislike of all outward pomp, that the Pope was constrained to admonish him

that, while living with an innocent conscience towards God, he should order his dress, retinue, and other things in such wise as beseemed the honour of his state and dignity. Ximenes obeyed, and henceforth appeared in public with the magnificence usual in his time and country. One day, on the occasion of some state ceremony, he made his appearance clad in a garment of very valuable skins; upon which a preacher publicly reproached him to his face with wearing a tunic of such great price as would have sufficed to support half the poor of Toledo. The cardinal received the rebuke with the utmost humility; he invited the preacher to his table; commended his sermon during the repast, and thanked him for his counsel; then, drawing aside the splendid robe, he showed him the hair-shirt which he wore next his skin, thus intimating to him that, while presenting to the eyes of men the splendour and adornments of a bishop, he observed in secret the poverty and austerity of a Franciscan monk. His biographer further relates, that the precious robe had been presented to the cardinal by a man of rank; that he kept it a few days, in order that he might not seem to slight the donor; but that afterwards, under pretence of an illness from which he was suffering, he sent it back, as being unfit for him at such a time.

49.

INVENTION OF THE HOLY CROSS.

In the year after the Nicene Council, A.D. 326, St. Helena, mother of the emperor Constantine, and then nearly eighty years of age, undertook a journey to the Holy Land, to visit the places consecrated by the presence of our Lord. On her arrival at Jerusalem, she was inspired with a great desire to find the Cross on which He suffered. It was the custom of the Jews to bury the instruments of death with the corpses of the malefactors; and, considering their eagerness to remove

the bodies both of Jesus and the thieves who were crucified with Him before the approaching feast, there seemed no reason to doubt that, after Joseph had begged His body of Pilate, and laid it in the neighbouring tomb, His cross, and those of the two thieves, as well as the bodies of the latter, had been thrown hastily into the ground on the very place of crucifixion. But where that place was it was not easy to ascertain; for the city had been destroyed, and its soil ploughed up, in punishment for the very deeds the memorial of which Helena was seeking to discover. Our Lord had suffered outside the walls; but the population, driven from Mounts Sion and Acra, which it had hitherto occupied, had overflowed towards the north, and, without as yet covering Calvary itself, had obliterated the features of the immediate neighbourhood. Moreover, the emperor Hadrian, to drive away worshippers from the sacred places, had erected statues of the pagan divinities over them, and at length had effaced all general recollections of their respective localities. The empress, however, consulted the most learned men on the spot, both Jews and Christians; and at length, directed, we may piously believe, by a prescience more than human, she gave orders to the soldiers who accompanied her to clear away both buildings and soil from the place which she had selected. When all had been removed,—the pagan statues and altars, the artificial mound on which they stood, and the earth which was beneath it,—there lay revealed before the eyes of the empress the holy sepulchre in which the Lord had lain, and near it three crosses, the nails which had pierced His hands and feet, and the title which had been placed above His head. The last was lying apart by itself;—how, then, distinguish between the cross of the Redeemer and those of the two malefactors? St. Macarius, the Bishop of Jerusalem, suggested a mode of solution. There was in the city a noble lady, long afflicted with sickness, and now at the point of death; by the directions of the holy bishop, she was carried on her bed to

the spot; and no sooner was she touched by the salutary cross of the Lord than on the instant she was perfectly cured.

The empress, full of joy at having recovered the very instrument of the world's redemption, erected a church upon the spot; and in it she placed the Holy Cross, enclosed within a richly-enchased shrine of silver. A part of it, however, she carried to the emperor her son, then at Constantinople; and another she took with her to Rome, to be placed in the church which she built in that city, and to which was given the name of the Holy Cross of Jerusalem; where it remains to this day. There also, in the same church, is deposited the title, on the top of an arch; where, in the year 1492, it was found, as it had been placed, in a case of lead.

St. Paulinus relates, that the portion which was kept at Jerusalem gave off fragments of itself without suffering diminution; "having imbibed," he says, "this undecaying virtue, and this unwasting solidity, from the Blood of that Flesh which underwent death, yet saw not corruption." St. Cyril also, speaking in the very church which had been erected on the spot of the discovery twenty-five years after the event, says that "the whole world was filled with the portions of the wood of the cross," which had been "distributed piecemeal;" and compares the wonder to the miraculous feeding of five thousand men by the multiplication of the loaves.

50.

MARY OUR REFUGE.

The Bishop of Verdun relates a touching incident, of which he was an eye-witness in his first visit to Rome. Two poor men, who were drinking at a tavern, quarrelled; and becoming violently excited, one of them seized a knife which was on the table, and attempted to strike his companion, who fled in terror of

his life. He was pursued, and almost overtaken, when he perceived an image of the Madonna at a short distance; he fled towards it, and, throwing himself down at its feet, turned towards his adversary, and said, "Have you the heart to kill me under the very eyes of our Mother?" The hand, which had been raised to strike him, fell as if paralysed, and the knife dropped at the feet of the Madonna. Of course a reconciliation ensued; and this poor man's love of our Blessed Lady, and his confidence in her protection, were the means not only of preserving his life, but of saving his companion from the commission of a great crime.

51.

A MARTYR OF LA VENDÉE.

In the little village of Bas Briacé there stands a wooden cross, enclosed by a low wall; and within the enclosure may still be seen the remains of another cross, apparently of ancient date, overgrown with moss. Here once flowed the blood of a martyr, a native of this village, named Ripoche, who was a soldier in the Catholic army. Being taken prisoner by the Blues, he was led to the foot of this cross. The republicans then said to him, "You have been taken with arms in your hands, and are condemned to die. But see, yonder is the cottage where you were born, and where your father still lives; only do as we bid you, and your life shall be spared."

The Vendean looked towards his beloved home, and the tears came to his eyes. "What must I do," he asked, "to save my life?" "Take this axe, and destroy that cross," was the reply.

Ripoche took the axe. His fellow-prisoners turned away their heads; they thought he was about to deny his God. But they were mistaken. Ripoche sprang upon the pedestal on which the cross stood, and, brand-

ishing the axe, he cried with a loud voice, "Death to him who insults the Cross of Christ! I will defend it to my last breath."

As he leaned against the sacred emblem, waving the axe above his head, a holy ardour shone in his eyes, and he seemed to be endued with supernatural strength. For a while he succeeded in keeping off the sacrilegious ruffians. They stood as it were confounded at the sight of so much courage, and hesitated to advance. At length, ashamed of being baffled by one single man, with frightful yells they rushed upon the brave Christian. Overpowered by numbers, he was soon covered with wounds. Still he clung to the cross; his assailants violently unclasped his arms, they flung him down upon the pedestal, and holding the points of their bayonets to his heart, they said, "Throw down that sign of superstition, and you shall live."

"It is the sign of my salvation," cried the Vendean; "I will embrace it once more before I die."

With a last effort, he threw himself at the foot of the cross; and clasping his arms about it, thus received his death-wound.

52.

STORY OF A DRAPER.

A draper at Paris was moved to pity at seeing the misery and neglect in which a poor child in his vicinity was living. The father, who had been a widower for many years, led a very disgraceful life; and M. L. adopted the child, sent him to school, afterwards apprenticed him to a carpet-manufacturer, and succeeded in bringing him up a good workman and a good man.

In 1839, Peter (for that was his name) went to America, where his good master had obtained an excellent situation for him in a commercial house in Mexico. Years rolled on, and Peter was grieved that he had never heard any thing of his benefactor. For some time his letters had been unanswered; and as he had realised a

competency by his exertions and good conduct, he returned to France. On reaching Paris, some time elapsed before he was able to discover his benefactor; and when he did so, it was to learn that he had been cruelly tried by reverses of fortune, and was compelled to make a livelihood by selling old books on one of the quays of the capital. It was there Peter met with him, when he least expected it. Time and absence had so altered the features of the young man, that his old master was full of astonishment when he found himself suddenly embraced by one whom he believed to be a stranger. However, if Peter's face was changed, his heart was not. "But for you," said he to M. L., after the first effusion of joy was over,—“but for your charity to the poor deserted child, I should have been either a beggar or a thief; but, thanks to your kindness, I am in a situation of credit; and my fortune has no value in my eyes except so far as it enables me to show my gratitude to you. Blessed be the hour in which we have once more met, never to part again.” In the fullness of his heart, Peter would make two persons happy at once; and said to a poor neighbour of his old master, “My friend, carry off all this heap of old books. I make you a present of them. My benefactor no longer requires to live by his labour; his future subsistence is secured to him.”

53.

JULIAN THE APOSTATE.

After having renounced his belief in Christianity, Julian the Apostate was impious enough to attempt to falsify the divine prophecies; especially that of Daniel, who foretold the irreparable destruction of the temple at Jerusalem, and that of Jesus Christ, who said that not one stone should be left upon another. In the year 363 he collected the most skilful workmen from every country, and intrusted the superintendence of the work to Alypius, one of his most confidential officers. The

Jews assembled together from every quarter of the world, triumphantly affirming that the kingdom of Israel was about to be restored; nor did they hesitate to heap every manner of insult on the Christians, knowing that they had the countenance of the imperial power.

It was quite an enthusiastic movement. We are told that some used spades and pickaxes of silver, and that the rubbish was removed in mantles of silk and purple. Both sexes, all ranks, took part in the labour, entering upon the ruins, clearing away the rubbish, and laying bare the foundations. It was an easy task to demolish what little remained of the ancient temple, so as not to leave one stone upon another, according to the letter of the sacred Scriptures; and with equal facility did they excavate the soil for the foundations of the new temple which they proposed to build in defiance of the decree of the Almighty. But no sooner did they begin to build than the work was interrupted by a violent whirlwind, which scattered far and wide the vast quantities of lime, sand, and other materials collected for the building. A storm of thunder and lightning followed; fire fell from heaven; and the workmen's tools, the spades, the axes, and the saws, were melted down. Then came an earthquake, which threw up the stones of the old foundations of the temple, filled up the excavations which had been made for the new foundations, and threw down the buildings in the neighbourhood, and especially the public porticoes, in which were numbers of the Jews who had been aiding the undertaking, and who were buried in the ruins. The workmen returned to their work; but from the recesses laid open by the earthquake balls of fire burst out; and that again and again as often as they renewed the attempt. The fiery mass ranged up and down the street for hours; and when some fled to a neighbouring church for safety, the fire met them at the door and forced them back, burning their flesh to the very bone, or reducing their whole body to cinders.

At length the commotion ceased; a calm succeeded;

and a luminous cross of exceeding brilliancy, surrounded by a circle, appeared in the sky, reaching from Calvary to the Mount of Olives. Nay, upon the garments and upon the bodies of the persons present crosses were impressed, which were luminous by night, and at other times of a dark colour, and would not wash out. Nevertheless the obstinate Jews would not give up the work, but returned to it again and again; and were determined, at all risks, to obtain the favour of the apostate prince by doing his behest. But they were as repeatedly driven back in the same fatal and miraculous manner; so that, at last, several of them, and a greater number of the heathens, openly confessed the divinity of Jesus Christ, and were baptised.

This wonderful event is related not only by ecclesiastical, but also by pagan historians, such as Ammian Marcellin, who professed himself a great admirer of Julian the Apostate; and Julian himself makes allusion to the fact. St. Gregory of Nazianzen, St. Ambrose, St. John Chrysostom, spoke of it publicly a few years after it happened, in the presence of a multitude of hearers, to whom they addressed themselves as to persons who had been eye-witnesses of the occurrence; and St. Chrysostom especially added that, in his time, the foundations which the Jews had dug might still be seen; and that this was to all who beheld it an indisputable proof of what impiety had attempted, but could not execute.

54.

A CHARITABLE BEGGAR.

An old man was taken up by the police of Paris under the law for the prevention of mendicity, and was on the point of being convicted accordingly, when a priest presented himself at the bar, requesting to be allowed to make some observations in favour of the culprit.

The President: "Who are you, sir?"

Priest: "I am the curé of Notre Dame des Victoires. This old man was formerly a justice of peace, and has lost all he possessed through lending considerable sums of money to persons in distress, which have never been returned to him. He is now very poor; but such is the excess of his charity, that he always believes other people poorer than himself. So eleven sous are enough for his daily support; six for his lodging, and the rest to supply his other wants. If any more is given him, he distributes it amongst the poor. I know he is guilty in the eye of the law, which forbids begging; but when you know that his mind is impaired by his misfortunes, I think you will not convict him. Depend upon it, he does not understand the penalty he has incurred. If the court will be indulgent to him, I will undertake that Charriere (that was the man's name) shall not commit the same offence again."

The venerable witness was continuing his speech, when the president stopped him, and in a voice which betokened great emotion, directed Charriere to be discharged.

55.

ST. CUTHBERT'S VISION.

St. Cuthbert, when a boy, used to tend sheep on the mountains in the neighbourhood of Melrose. One night, whilst his companions were sleeping, and he himself was awake and engaged, as was his wont, in prayer, on a sudden he saw a long stream of light break through the darkness; and in the midst a company of the heavenly host descended to the earth, and having received among them a spirit of surpassing brightness, returned without delay to their heavenly home. The youth, beloved of God, was struck with the sight, and stimulated thereby to engage in the glorious conflict of the spiritual warfare and earn for himself eternal life and happiness among God's mighty ones. He forthwith offered up praise and thanksgiving

to the Lord, and called upon his companions, with brotherly exhortation, to imitate his example. "Miserable men that we are," said he, "whilst we are resigning ourselves to sleep and idleness, we take no thought to behold the light of God's holy angels, who never sleep! Behold, whilst I was awake and praying, I saw the great wonders of God. The door of heaven was opened, and there was led in thither, amidst an angelic company, the spirit of some holy man, who, now for ever blessed, gazes on the glory of the heavenly mansion, and Christ its King, whilst we still grovel amid this earthly darkness; and I think it must have been some holy bishop, or some favoured one of the company of the faithful, whom I saw thus carried into heaven amidst so much splendour by that numerous angelic choir." When the morning was come, Cuthbert found that Aidan, Bishop of the Church of Lindisfarne, a man of exalted piety, had ascended to the heavenly kingdom at the very moment of his vision. Immediately, therefore, he delivered over the sheep he was feeding to their owners, and determined straightway to enter a monastery.

56.

ST. CUTHBERT'S BODY.

When the great St. Cuthbert lay dying in his narrow cell at Farne Island, he gave this parting injunction to the brethren: "Have no communion with those who err from the unity of the Catholic faith; and know and remember, that if of two evils you are compelled to choose one, I would much rather that, taking up out of the tomb and bearing away my bones, you would leave this place, to reside wherever God may direct you, than consent in any way to the wickedness of schismatics, and so place a yoke upon your necks." Accordingly, when the Danes invaded Northumbria, A.D. 875, murdering and destroying whatever fell in

their way, the monks of Lindisfarne carried with them the holy body in their flight, leaving their abbey to pillage and the flames. For seven years they wandered from place to place, bearing on their shoulders their precious treasure "through trackless and waterless places," many pious people of the shire following with them. Wherever he went, the saint was received with honour and respect. Some on their bended knees offered him money; others brought precious garments and silks; others gave linen and flax, woollen cloths, and fleeces of wool; and those who had nothing else to bestow contributed bread and cheese. At length, when (A.D. 883) the victories of King Alfred restored peace to the Christians of the north, the monks descended from the mountains and deposited the body of the saint at Chester-le-Street, where new distinctions awaited him. Chester-le-Street became the bishop's see; and kings and bishops strove with honourable rivalry to outdo each other in showing honour to St. Guthbert. Alfred and Guthred the Dane united in giving the whole of the land between the Wear and the Tyne for a perpetual possession to the saint and to those who should serve his church.

For a hundred and thirteen years the monks remained with their treasure at Chester-le-Street; but in the year 995 the Danes again drove the bishop and his clergy from their home; and remembering the dying words of the saint, they bore his body with them, and fled with it southward, accompanied by a large multitude of people. After three or four months, peace was restored, and the monks set out on their return; but when they had proceeded but a little way, and were in the middle of the country, in an uninhabitable spot, suddenly the vehicle on which the body lay became immovable as a rock, and resisted all their efforts. Then the bishop ordered all, by fasting, watching, and prayer, to seek a manifestation of the Divine will as to whither they should turn their steps with the remains of their saintly father; and it was revealed to one of the monks that

they should bear the body to Durham, which should henceforth be the resting-place of the saint. So it came to pass that St. Cuthbert, after all his wanderings, took up his abode at Durham, which to his presence owed all its subsequent magnificence; for, at the time of his arrival, it was but a "barbarous and rude place, filled with nothing but thorns and thickets, save only in the midst, wherein was a plain and commodious site."

The wanderings of the saint had lasted, with intervals, one hundred and twenty-four years; yet all this time his body was perfectly incorrupt. When it had lain in the ground eleven years, it was exhumed by the brethren, and placed in a wooden shrine, or feretory, over the spot where it had been buried. To their astonishment, they found it entire, as if he were alive; the limbs still pliant and the joints flexible, as if he were not dead but sleeping; even the vestments he wore not only were undecayed, but retained wonderfully their original freshness and colour. After the removal of the body to Durham, the church was served by secular clergy; but in the year 1082 it was made over to the monks of St. Benedict, in whose possession it remained down to the so-called Reformation. Ten years afterwards, the old church was pulled down, and the foundation of a new one laid; and in the year 1104, when the cathedral was so far finished as to allow of it, the body of St. Cuthbert was removed to the feretory prepared for it. It was then that a second examination of the sacred remains was made, full particulars of which are on record. Nine of the brethren, selected for the purpose, together with the prior, prepared themselves for the solemn office with fasting and prayer; and on the evening of the 24th of August, after having prostrated themselves before the venerated tomb, they, with tears and supplications, and something of fear and trembling, commenced the work of opening it. After much labour and long hesitation, during which they had all but abandoned their intention out of reverence for him

who reposed therein, they at last raise the lid of the coffin, and, removing the linen cloth that covered the holy relics, they inhale an odour of the sweetest fragrance; and, lo, there lay before their eyes the venerable body of the blessed father, perfectly incorrupt, as the tradition of three hundred years had reported it to be. At the sight of this they were seized with a great fear, and retiring to a little distance, dared not fix their eyes on the miracle that was before them. Falling on their knees, they began to strike their breasts; and raising their eyes and hands to heaven, exclaimed frequently, "Have mercy on us, O Lord; have mercy on us." When it was morning, they related the wonders of God to a full assembly of the brethren, who at first, as it were stupefied at the strangeness of the event, showed their joy more by tears than words; then, on bended knees, they returned thanks to Jesus Christ, who in His mercy had shown them how great were the merits of their patron. But when the day of translation came, one of the neighbouring abbots, chagrined at not having been invited to be present at the opening of the tomb, began to call in question the fact to which the brethren testified, and to declare that they were saying rather what was false than what was true of what they had done. But all this was, by the providence of God, made to turn to the surer confirmation of the miracle and the greater glory of the saint. For, by the advice of the Abbot of Seez in Normandy, who was afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury, the monks consented to a renewed examination of the body, which was conducted by the said abbot himself. Unfolding the coverings wrapped round the venerable head, he raised it a little in the sight of all, bending it in different directions, and even moving the ears backwards and forwards with some degree of force. Then he examined the other parts of the body, and found it with its nerves and bones solid and covered with soft flesh; nay, with both his hands he raised the body so high that it almost appeared to sit in its quiet abode. Lastly,

lifting up his voice, he exclaimed, "Behold, my brethren, this body lies here, lifeless indeed, but as sound and entire as on the day on which the soul left it to wing its flight to heaven."

At length came that dark epoch in English history when the possessions of the Church stimulated the bad passions of a monarch in whose breast lust, avarice, and pride struggled for mastery. In the year 1537 the royal commissioners, who went through the length and breadth of the land to destroy the monuments of Catholicity, arrived at Durham, and sacrilegiously defaced and pillaged the shrine of St. Cuthbert. After plundering it of all its ornaments and jewels, they opened the chest in which the body lay; and when they thought to find nothing but dust and bones, they beheld the saint lying whole and incorrupt, with his face bare and his beard as if it were but a fortnight's growth, and all his vestments upon him, as he was accustomed to say Mass, and his wand of gold lying beside him. Then Dr. Henley, one of the commissioners, called to the smith, and bade him cast down the bones. But the man made answer that the body would not come asunder. Then Dr. Ley, another commissioner, did step up, and speaking in Latin to Dr. Henley, said that "he was lying whole." Yet Dr. Henley would give no credit to his words, but still did cry, "Cast down his bones;" to which the other replied, "If you will not believe me, come up yourself and see him." Then did Dr. Henley step up to him, and did handle him, and did see that he was whole and incorrupt; nay, and the vestments, in which his body lay and in which he was clothed, were fresh, whole, and unconsumed. So was it made abundantly evident, even on the testimony of enemies and unbelievers, that the body of St. Cuthbert remained inviolate and incorrupt for eight hundred and fifty years. In fact, if the body had not been found entire, the bones would have been burnt, as were those of St. Thomas, St. Edmund, and the rest; whereas, by the directions of the king, the body

was again buried underground, beneath the very spot over which the shrine had been elevated.

In 1827 the tomb was again reopened by the Protestant authorities, apparently from no more laudable motive than curiosity. The affair was conducted in a very business-like way; and the result was the discovery of a skeleton, a few fragments of bones, and some robes in the last stage of decay. They thought they had now seen and handled all that remained of the great Catholic saint, the object of so much veneration for centuries. But they were mistaken; as Monsignore Eyre, the latest biographer of St. Cuthbert, has sufficiently shown. The grave in which the saint lay had been disturbed between the years 1542 and 1827, as was apparent from the opening found in the masonry at the end of the vault, and which had been filled up with loose stones, and the disappearance of the linen sheet in which the body had been wrapped, but of which no fragments were discovered. The probable time of this removal was during the reign of Queen Mary, when those who had been Benedictine monks were, under the name of secular canons, in possession of the cathedral. St. Cuthbert had bidden the brethren have no communion with those who err from the unity of the Catholic faith, but take up his bones out of the tomb and bear them away, rather than consent in any way to the wickedness of schismatics, and so place a yoke upon their necks. The sons of St. Benedict knew well this dying injunction of the saint; they knew that their predecessors had journeyed over hill and dale, far and wide, to keep his body safe from the hands of the spoiler; and they had seen his shrine violated by the commissioners, its treasures stolen away, and the body itself treated with indignity. What more natural, therefore, than that they should wish to conceal his remains till happier times returned? But, in fact, there has ever been a tradition that the body of St. Cuthbert was removed from the feretory to some other part of the church, another body being substituted in its place;

and that a select number of the English monks of St. Benedict are in possession of the secret.

“ There, deep in Durham’s gothic shade,
His relics are in secret laid :
But none may know the place,
Save of his holiest servants three,
Deep sworn to solemn secrecy,
Who share that wondrous grace.”—*Marmion*.

So sings the poet of the North ; and in substance correctly, though he errs in detail. Monsignore Eyre ascertained from one of the Benedictines *in possession of the secret*, that it is not confined to three of their community, neither is it held on oath ; and that they have in their possession a plan of the cathedral, on which the exact spot of the saint’s present resting-place is marked. We may well believe, therefore, with his biographer, that “ this secret will be disclosed when England again becomes Catholic, and the cathedral shall again revert to Catholic hands : no doubt, those that come after us will see the day when the honoured relics of the apostle of Northumbria, the British Thaumaturgus, will be brought from their hiding-place, and again raised with honour and pomp in their original shrine, before which the devout believer in the communion of saints will not be ashamed to kneel ; and they will think of us and of the generation gone before them, and will perhaps make intercession for us, kneeling at that very shrine. In the meanwhile we may all pray, ‘ Deal favourably, O Lord, in Thy goodwill, with Sion, that the walls of Jerusalem may be built up.’ ”

57.

CARDINAL DE CHEVERUS.

The Cardinal de Cheverus, late Archbishop of Bourdeaux, won all hearts by his extreme courtesy in society no less than by the unmeasured liberality with which he gave up the whole of his revenues to the necessitous.

He was one day visited by a lady, who, after apologising for the liberty she was taking in approaching him with such a request, proceeded, "Monseigneur, I know you are averse to preaching charity-sermons in a general way, and merely with a view to creating a sensation; nevertheless, this is what I am come to ask you to do; and, I can assure you, never was there a worthier object of your sympathy than he in whose behalf I would interest you. You must permit me, however, to retain as an inviolable secret the name of the person for whom I plead; for though, I assure you, he has beggared himself by his acts of charity, to that extent that he has not so much as a change of clothes left, he would never forgive his best friend were he to become aware that he had betrayed his condition or its cause to any third person." The lady did not plead in vain; the archbishop complied with her request. A few days after the sermon had been preached, the lady paid a second visit to the bishop's house, and after a kind welcome, was assured of the warm interest the Cardinal had felt for her protégé, whose history, he said, had touched him so deeply, that he felt sure he must have moved his audience to help him; and desired to know whether the collection had sufficed to remove the pressure of his embarrassments. "You shall answer for yourself," said the lady, throwing open all the drawers and presses, which, with the connivance of his house-keeper, she had caused to be filled with clothes, linen, and other supplies. "It is you that are the generous and charitable man who have stripped yourself of every thing during this winter to supply the wants of the poor and suffering. Forgive me the not inexcusable stratagem which I was obliged to play off upon you."

On another occasion, the Cardinal was walking outside the gates of Bourdeaux, when he was accosted by a beggar. M. de Cheverus, who never refused an alms, put his hand into his pocket and gave him a franc. "Monseigneur," said one of his attendants, "I think you must have made a mistake; the man you have

just given to is a Jew." "Thank you," replied the Cardinal; "it is true I did not know it." Then, recalling the beggar, he put a five-franc piece into his hand, adding, "There are so few who would give him any thing."

The good archbishop's friends, who did not like to see him spend so little on himself, and deny himself even such indulgences as his position would have justified, took great pains to persuade him to keep a carriage; and at last, as they thought, hit upon a capital expedient to accomplish their object. A grand visit of ceremony was to be paid to some great man passing through the place upon a public occasion, and the zealous friends of M. de Cheverus told him plainly that etiquette required he should present himself in due state; that they would willingly offer him one of their carriages, but it would not be considered fitting or respectful he should appear in any but his own. The archbishop reluctantly yielded, and begged one of them to undertake to see to it, and to order as modest an equipage as possible for his use. The day arrived, and the conveyance was at the door. Monseigneur stepped into it much against his inclination; but he had not gone beyond the episcopal precincts before he ordered his new coachman to stop, and, opening the door, he alighted, saying, "Let's get out of this, my friends; I cannot feel at my ease. I have done very well without a carriage hitherto, and don't wish to begin to be troubled with it at this time of day. Let us proceed to M. le Général on foot, and if his excellency won't receive us—well, all I can say is, so much the worse for him."

PIETY OF THE TYROLESE.

A poor Catholic village in the Austrian Tyrol lately gave an affecting example at once of piety and delicacy of feeling, on occasion of the melancholy death of King

Frederic-Augustus of Saxony, who was thrown from his overturned carriage, and had his head crushed under the hoof of one of the horses. The Queen Marie, who was at first quite overwhelmed by the catastrophe, found in religion the consolation which it alone is capable of affording. One of her first thoughts was to raise a cross upon the spot where her husband had received the fatal blow, and she sent orders into the Tyrol to that effect. Her desires had been forestalled; the inhabitants of the village had already erected the sign of consolation and hope on the scene of the calamity. When the queen heard of this voluntary act of respect, she inquired what she could do to testify her gratitude. The people replied, that the parish was too poor to pay for the oil of the lamp which should burn before the Blessed Sacrament, and they requested she would supply it to them. Thus did the disinterested request of the poor Tyrolese direct the gratitude of the queen to the highest object, the honour of Jesus in the Sacrament of His love.

59.

THE OAK OF HILDESHEIM.

One day, while Louis the Gentle was following the chase in a forest in Saxony, his eagerness carried him some distance from his attendants; and losing all traces of the prey he was pursuing, he found himself in the midst of a vast solitude under a wide-spreading oak. By way of employing the time, he wished to say some prayers; and requested his chaplain, who was the only person of his suite who had kept up with him, to attach to the trunk of the oak a small picture of the Blessed Virgin which he held in great veneration, and always carried about near his person. While they were occupied at their devotions the sound of horns was heard, to which Louis immediately replied, and, mounting his horse, hastened to rejoin his train. The chaplain in his

hurry forgot the picture, which remained attached to the oak; nor did his neglect occur to him until the following morning. Knowing that the emperor would miss the picture from its accustomed place during Mass, he hastened to the spot where he had left it. He easily recognised the tree; but the picture was not to be seen upon it, and he sought all around for it in vain. At last he discovered it on another and still larger oak; but when he proceeded to detach it from the tree, to his surprise he found all his efforts powerless to remove it.

Astonished at so extraordinary a circumstance, the chaplain returned to the emperor, and informed him of what had taken place. Louis hastened with his court to the spot, and was himself witness of the prodigy. He caused a church to be built near it; and as it became a place famous for pilgrimages, dwellings were erected for the pilgrims; and these by degrees increasing formed a town, which afterwards became an important city and the seat of a bishopric. Such is the origin which tradition assigns to the city of Hildesheim.

60.

THE MARTYR TO THE SECRECY OF THE
CONFESSIONAL.

The emperor Wincelas, blinded by his own vile passions, and only irritated the more by the piety and humility of his consort, was seized with a fit of senseless jealousy, and, bent upon knowing the empress's real sentiments respecting him, determined upon compelling her director, John Nepomucen, to reveal to him the matter of her confession. Accordingly he sent for the man of God, and after sounding him cautiously on the subject, at length ventured to put the direct question to him, promising inviolable secrecy, and offering him honours and wealth, and every mark of his royal favour, if he would comply.

Horrified at the proposal, John Nepomucen, with the utmost respect, endeavoured to show the emperor how contrary both to reason and religion such sacrilegious conduct would be. The emperor, who looked only for servile obedience to his will, with difficulty dissembled his rage; and the saint knew by his morose and gloomy silence what he had to expect from his resentment. Nor was it long before his fears were realised. One day, when the tyrant was at dinner, a fowl was served up at table which was not dressed according to his taste. In a spirit worthy of Caligula or Heliogabalus, he had the cruelty to sentence the cook to be spitted and roasted at the same fire. The barbarous order was actually being put into execution, when John Nepomucen, informed of what was passing, ran with haste to the palace, and throwing himself at the feet of the emperor, implored him to spare the life of his servant. Wincelas gave no heed to his prayers and expostulations; and at length, when the saint solemnly threatened him with the judgments of God, ordered him to be dragged from his presence and thrown into a dungeon. The holy man bore this indignity with joy, knowing well the real cause of the king's enmity. Wincelas, indeed, made no secret of it; but sent a message to him in prison, declaring that he should never recover his liberty until he consented to divulge the empress's confession. Nevertheless, a few days after, he sent an order for his release, entreating the saint to forget all that had passed, and inviting him, as an assurance of his good-will and confidence, to an entertainment on the morrow which had been prepared expressly in his honour.

During the repast, the emperor treated his guest with the utmost courtesy and respect; but no sooner had the rest of the company retired than Wincelas renewed his solicitations; and finding all his promises without effect, threatened the saint with the most horrible tortures and death unless he yielded to his demands. John Nepomucen simply answered as before, that the

most sacred laws of the Church enjoined secrecy, and that nothing could induce him to violate them. The emperor, finding that all his endeavours were still fruitless, and transported with fury at the resistance he encountered, commanded him to be reconducted to prison, and cruelly tortured. The executioners stretched the holy man upon the rack, and applied burning torches to his sides, as well as to the most sensitive parts of his body. They then roasted him by a slow fire, and treated him with the utmost barbarity. In the midst of these agonising torments, the only words he uttered were the sacred names of Jesus and Mary. When at length they removed him from the rack, he was almost dead; but the God whom he served miraculously sustained him in his sufferings, and visited him with the most sweet consolations. Meanwhile the empress, hearing what had happened, threw herself at her husband's feet, and by her tears and importunate entreaties procured the release of the saint.

John Nepomucen now appeared again at court; but he knew that the calm would not last long, and prepared himself for the final struggle. In order to obtain the grace to make a holy death, he went to Buntzel to visit the celebrated image of the Blessed Virgin, which had been placed there by the first apostles of the Sclavonians, SS. Cyril and Methodius, and was regarded with great veneration throughout Bohemia. As he was returning from his pilgrimage, the emperor descried him from one of the windows of the palace, and the sight renewed all his anger and impious curiosity. He commanded the saint to be brought before him, and rudely told him that he must make instant choice between death and the revelation of the empress's confession. John Nepomucen made no reply; but his silence sufficiently expressed his resolution. Then Wincelas, filled with rage, cried to the guards that surrounded him, "Take this man out of my sight; and as soon as it is dark throw him into the river, that the people may be ignorant of his fate." The saint

employed the short time that remained in preparing for his sacrifice; when evening came, he was bound hand and foot, and thrown off the bridge which joins the Great and Little Prague into the river Muldaw. But scarcely had the pure soul of the martyr taken its flight to heaven, when his body floated upon the surface of the water, surrounded by so bright and heavenly a light, that it attracted a large crowd of spectators. The empress, who was ignorant of what had taken place, went with haste to Wincelas to inquire what could be the meaning of the strange light on the river which she beheld from the window of her apartment. Struck with terror, the emperor made no reply, but, rushing from her presence, fled like one distracted into the country, forbidding any one to follow him.

At daybreak the mystery was cleared up; the executioners betrayed the tyrant's secret. The whole town went to see the body of the saint; the canons of the cathedral came in procession to remove it with every mark of honour, and bore it into the neighbouring church of the Holy Cross amidst an immense concourse of persons. Every one pressed forward to kiss the hands and feet of the glorious martyr, to recommend himself to his powerful intercession, and to procure, if possible, some relic of his clothes, or whatever else had belonged to him. In defiance of the emperor's prohibition, who had given orders for the private removal of the body, it was carried to the cathedral with all magnificence by the clergy and the whole population of the city, and deposited in a tomb, on which the following inscription may still be read: "Under this stone lies the body of the most venerable and most glorious Thaumaturgus,* John Nepomucen, doctor, canon of this church, and confessor of the empress, who, because he had faithfully kept inviolate the seal of confession, was cruelly tortured, and thrown from the bridge of Prague into the river Muldaw by the orders of Wincelas IV. emperor and king of Bohemia, son of Charles IV. 1383."

* Worker of miracles.

THE ARCHBISHOP AND THE PENITENT.

A man who had been a very grievous sinner went to confession to the venerable Archbishop of Sens, Pierre de Gorbeil. He made a full confession of all his sins; and during the recital, which was frequently interrupted by sobs and groans, he asked, with a torrent of tears, if it were possible for such an infamous sinner to be forgiven. The bishop told him not to doubt of God's mercy, provided he were sincerely desirous of doing penance for his sins. "What!" said the penitent, "will God be satisfied with any thing that I can do, who have offended Him so grievously? Tell me what to do; lay upon me any penance; but is it possible to impose any that can bear the slightest proportion to the heinousness of my sins?" The holy bishop shed tears of joy at hearing such expressions of compunction, and said to him, "Your penance shall be only for seven years." "My father," replied the penitent, "only seven years! Alas, the longest life would not suffice to atone for the greatness of my offences!"

"It shall be even less, my child," said the archbishop; "you shall do no more than fast for three days on bread and water."

"O my father, is this possible?" said the penitent, as he shed tears, and humbly beat his breast; "do not let me perish; do not humour my weakness; but let my punishment bear some proportion to my sins; for indeed I am ready to do all I can to atone for my past life."

The bishop, lifting up his heart in thankfulness to God, who had inspired such dispositions, told the penitent that he need do nothing more but say one "Our Father," and assured him of the divine forgiveness.

At that moment the heart of the penitent, overcome with grief for his sins, and with thankfulness to God for His mercies, broke from the very violence of

its emotions, and he fell dead at the feet of his confessor; expiring in the very act of contrition by which he obtained pardon from God, and, we may well believe, immediate entrance into heaven.

62.

ST. JOHN GUALBERT.

The only brother of John Gualbert, a young warrior of noble birth, was cruelly murdered. For a long time after the commission of the crime the murderer took the greatest care to avoid any of the family, who were determined on revenge. However, one Good Friday, Gualbert, accompanied by his servants, was riding in a narrow lane, and came so suddenly upon him that it was impossible for the man to conceal himself. In despair of his life he threw himself upon his knees, and extending his arms in the form of a cross, besought the young nobleman by the passion of Christ to spare his life. Gualbert, touched by his humility, and by his appeal in the name of Him who prayed for His murderers on the cross, raised him gently from the ground and said, "I can refuse nothing that is asked of me for the sake of Jesus Christ. I give you not only your life, but my friendship for ever. Pray for me that God may pardon me my sin." After embracing each other they parted, and John rode on, and passing the church of St. Minias, near Florence, went in to pray. While engaged in begging God, with many tears and great fervour, to grant him pardon of his sins, he observed the large crucifix, before which he was kneeling, incline its head towards him, as if to testify approbation of his Christian forbearance. Deeply impressed with this miracle, a sudden desire seized him to renounce the world, and consecrate the remainder of his life to the service of God. There was a monastery of St. Benedict attached to the church; Gualbert therefore sent for the

abbot, and casting himself at his feet, related to him the miracle he had witnessed, and begged to be permitted at once to put on the religious habit. The abbot, however, though he advised him to give up the pleasures of a worldly life, yet being apprehensive of his father's displeasure, and wishing also to put the young man's resolution to the test, hesitated to receive him, and vividly depicted the severity and mortifications he would have to undergo in the monastic state. But Gualbert's resolution remained unshaken. In the mean time his servants, whom he had dismissed on some pretext, became alarmed at his non-appearance, and hastened back to his father to relate what had occurred. In great agitation the old man hurried to the monastery, and with mingled threats and entreaties ordered the monks to deliver up his son; but John, knowing too well his father's violence, and the errand on which he had come, determined not to see him. In his perplexity he said to himself, "Surely I can never receive the habit in so sacred a manner as from the altar on which our Lord's Body and Blood are daily offered up;" and finding accidentally a habit belonging to one of the monks, he carried it quickly into the church, laid it reverently on the altar, and after having cut off his hair, joyfully clothed himself. The monks admired his zeal and devotion; and the abbot, seeing the youth among the other monks in the choir, called his father into the church. When the old man saw his son in the religious habit, he beat his breast and tore his clothes, and behaved as though he were out of his senses. But the abbot and good monks at length succeeded in appeasing his anger; he gradually became tranquil; and after listening to his son's reasons for the step he had taken, he gave Gualbert both his forgiveness and his blessing, and resigned himself entirely to the will of God.

It was John Gualbert who, in after years, founded the celebrated monastery of Vallambrosa.

63.

THE SEVEN SLEEPERS.

There are two opinions* as to the truth of the popular legend respecting these celebrated martyrs, both of which are supported by high authorities. Some say they were called sleepers, after the manner of Holy Scripture, because, being walled up in a cave, in the time of the Emperor Decius, they there "fell asleep in the Lord;" or because, when the cave was opened, after the lapse of about 200 years, their bodies were found still fresh, as if they had been alive. Others, again, hold to the tradition that they actually slept in the cave from the days of Decius to the latter years of Theodosius the younger.

The legend is as follows: during the terrible persecution which Decius instituted against the Christians, seven noble youths of Ephesus, whose names were Maximian, Malchus, Martian, Dionysius, John, Seripin, and Constantine, concealed themselves in a cavern in the side of an adjacent mountain; but their retreat being discovered and reported to the tyrant, he gave orders that the entrance should be blocked up with a pile of huge stones. They immediately fell into a deep slumber, which was miraculously prolonged without injury to the powers of life during a period of nearly two hundred years. At the end of that time the slaves of Adolius, to whom the inheritance of the mountain had descended, removed the stones in order to obtain materials for the construction of some rural edifice. The light of the sun darted into the cavern, and the seven sleepers awoke—after a slumber, as they thought, of a few hours. Pressed by the calls of hunger, they resolved that one of their number should secretly return to the city, and purchase bread for himself and his companions. The youth, for such in outward seeming he still re-

* Pope Benedict on "Heroic Virtue," vol. iii. p. 244 (Orat. transl.).

mained, when he emerged from the recesses of the mountain, could no longer recognise the once familiar aspect of his native country; and his surprise was increased, when, as he approached the city, he beheld a large cross erected as in triumph over the principal gate of Ephesus. His singular dress and obsolete language confounded the baker, to whom he offered an ancient coin of Decius in payment for the loaves he purchased; and on suspicion of having appropriated concealed treasure, he was dragged before the judge. Mutual inquiries then elicited the amazing discovery, that well-nigh two centuries had elapsed since the youth and his companions had fled from the rage of a pagan tyrant. The Bishop of Ephesus, the clergy, the magistrates, the people, and, as it is said, the Emperor Theodosius himself, hastened to visit the cavern of the Seven Sleepers. The aged martyrs, whose intercession the faithful had so long invoked, related their wonderful story, bestowed their benediction, and at the same instant peaceably expired. Gibbon says that the tradition may be traced up to within fifty years of the supposed event.

The Feast of the Seven Martyrs is kept by the Church on the 27th of July.

64.

CONSOLATRIX AFFLICTORUM.

St. Francis de Sales, while still a youth, was haunted by the distressing fear that it was impossible for him to be saved. His ardent love of God rendered this dread all the more agonising to him; and he seemed literally to pine away under the intense suffering that it caused him. As his bodily strength declined, his devotion to the Blessed Virgin increased. One day he prostrated himself before her image and exclaimed, "If I am doomed to be an alien from Thee, O my God, in an eternity of misery, let me at least devote my life to

Thee in this world; if I am not to be allowed to love Thee after death, may I love nothing but Thee in life." While expressing these devout sentiments he raised his eyes to the image of the Mother of Mercy to implore her intercession, and at that moment he was suddenly freed from the dread of losing his soul, and filled with the liveliest feelings of hope and trust. Such a merciful deliverance greatly increased his devotion to our Blessed Lady, in whose honour he made a practice of reciting the rosary every day of his life, however occupied he might be.

65.

THE ROMAN BEGGAR.

St. Servulus was a beggar and a paralytic from his childhood. He used to be carried daily into the portico of the church of St. Clement at Rome, his sole support being the alms of the faithful, with which he also relieved other poor persons. He was in the habit of asking pilgrims and others to read the Holy Scriptures to him, especially the Psalms; so that before his death, which occurred in the year 590, he knew nearly the whole Gospel by heart. As he was dying he continued chanting the praises of God: suddenly he ceased to sing, and said, "Hark! do you not hear that sweet melody in the sky?" and with these words he expired.

66.

M. D'ASSEBON, BISHOP OF DIJON.

M. d'Assebon, Bishop of Dijon, and afterwards Archbishop of Auch, was considered to be one of the most eminent of the bishops of France. He was conspicuous for every virtue, and especially for his charity towards the poor and unfortunate, of which one very

touching instance is recorded. One day the bishop heard that one of the houses in the town was on fire: he at once hurried to the spot; and on being told that, in one of the rooms there was a little child still remaining, whom they had not been able to rescue, he was so moved with compassion that, with tears in his eyes, he offered two thousand crowns to any one who would risk his life to save the child. But, as the flames were advancing with the utmost rapidity, no one could be found to attempt it. At length the noble-minded bishop desired them to bring a ladder, and to place it against the walls of the burning house, now almost consumed. He ascended it; and entered through the window into the room where the little creature lay. In a moment or two, he was seen emerging from the flames with the babe in his arms: accomplishing his perilous descent in safety, he restored the child to its parents, while the air resounded with the cheers of the immense crowd of people who had witnessed the noble act.

Nor was this all; the generous bishop bestowed upon the child the two thousand crowns which he had offered as a reward; thus making himself, not only the child's preserver, but also its benefactor.

67.

A RENEGADE AND MARTYR.

A young Armenian Catholic, not more than twenty-five years of age, having been guilty of intemperance at a party of pleasure, his dissolute companions took the opportunity to make him conform to the religion of Mahomet. As soon as he recovered his senses, and became aware of the sin he had committed, he was seized with horror and remorse; but it was to little purpose, for there was no escape for him who had once embraced Mahometanism. His shame and confusion were such, that he concealed himself for nearly two months. At

last, being unable to quiet his conscience, he went to a Jesuit priest, and acquainted him with the cause of his grief. The good father advised him to fly the country; but the young man expressed his reluctance to do so, on the ground that flight would not remove the scandal he had given. He knew that from the moment he renounced Mahometanism his doom was sealed; yet he felt that as all Constantinople was cognisant of his apostasy, the whole city should also witness his return to the true faith. The priest, anxious to test his sincerity and constancy, and fearing that his resolution might be nothing more than the effect of a momentary fervour, represented to him that God did not require such a sacrifice of him; that his repentance was sufficient; that he might be only exposing himself to temptation by thus voluntarily rushing into danger; and that, though he might have the courage to face death in any ordinary form, it required heroic fortitude not to shrink from the pains of martyrdom. The young man listened attentively to this advice; but when the Jesuit had finished speaking, he asked him to hear his confession, and to give him communion, hoping thereby to obtain that grace which would enable him to confess the faith in the presence of its bitterest enemies. The priest, satisfied with the dispositions of his penitent, praised his resolution, and encouraged him to persevere in a course to which he seemed to be called by God.

After having made his confession and received communion, he once more resumed his national dress, and repaired to the public hall, in which the merchants assembled; he there settled all his temporal affairs, which was easily done, for the Catholics, admiring his conduct, freely forgave him all he owed, and he, in return, forgave his debtors. The Turkish merchants also treated him with kindness, in the hope that they might persuade him to reconsider his determination; but he answered modestly, yet with firmness, that the greatest happiness to which he aspired was to die for that holy religion which, in an evil and unguarded moment, he

had been led to abjure. Some soldiers who were passing by at the time, overhearing these words, instantly seized him, and after maltreating him so cruelly that he was covered with his own blood, led him away to prison. Here he astonished the prisoners by the joy which he displayed; he continued in prayer until night had set in; and, before he closed his eyes in sleep, he begged an Armenian, who was confined in the same prison for debt, to waken him early, that he might resume his devotions. The next day he was visited by the Turks, who endeavoured by threats and promises to induce him to change his mind; but he returned the same answer which he had given to the merchants. The governor of the gaol, finding that no impression could be made upon him, carried him before the grand vizier, who also used all his influence to persuade him not to renounce the religion of Mahomet. In vain; the young man thanked him for his kindness, but assured him that all the benefits and favours he could lavish upon him could not compensate for that eternal misery which would be his portion if he were to die in his apostasy. The grand vizier now changed his tone, and assuming the authority of a magistrate, threatened him with death; but to this the young man replied, "Death is the only favour I ask, and it is the greatest I can receive in this world." Sentence was then passed upon him, and he was led to the place of execution. On his way he was met by one who assured him even yet of the prince's favour, if he would but abandon his purpose. By these repeated attempts to vanquish his resolution he obtained the very publicity he had so ardently desired, and had the opportunity of proclaiming himself a Christian in the presence of the sultan himself. Though he was heavily ironed, he drew his rosary from his bosom, and recited it with devotion, while his countenance expressed the interior joy with which his soul was filled. When he arrived at the place of execution he made the sign of the cross, and, raising his eyes to heaven, remained motionless, until his head was severed from his body.

His remains were exposed in the public street; but the Catholics paid them the reverence due to the relics of a martyr, dipping their handkerchiefs in his blood. The expression of his face, which was in no way disfigured by the violent death which he had undergone, was so beautiful, that even the Turks gazed upon it with admiration and wonder. According to the law and custom of the infidels, the body would have remained for three days exposed to public view, had not his countrymen purchased the permission to remove it for burial. They bore it in triumph to the cemetery, amidst an immense concourse of the faithful who thronged to kiss the feet of the corpse. His head was preserved and sent to Angora; and the bishop of the country drew up a formal statement of the manner and circumstance of the death of this young and heroic confessor.

68.

FATHER BERNARD.

In the reign of Louis XIII. there was at Paris a gentleman named Claude Bernard, from Dijon in Burgundy, whose extraordinary versatility and wit made him the favourite of the gay world. He was an incomparable mimic, as well as improvisatore, and no party of pleasure was considered complete without him. The Bishop of Belley, who admired his talents, and thought he perceived much good concealed under a worldly exterior, endeavoured to turn his mind towards the ecclesiastical state; but Bernard replied, that he would rather play his part in the world as a poor gentleman than as a poor priest. One day his companions invited him to go with them and hear a famous preacher who was to deliver a sermon in the afternoon in the church of the Ursulines. When they arrived the bell was ringing, and a large audience was assembled; and his facetious friends then informed him that he was himself the famous preacher, and must mount the pul-

pit and preach. He asked but for a short half-hour to make his preparation; and when it expired was on his way to the church, duly vested in cassock and surplice, and with a square cap on his head, when his deceased father appeared to him with a severe and majestic countenance, and said, "Beware what you do!" Struck with awe Bernard begun his discourse, taking as his text those words of the Gospel, "God so loved the world as to give His only-begotten Son;" and he treated the subject with such wonderful eloquence and fervour, that they who had come to laugh could not restrain their tears. The person most moved of all was the preacher himself; still this did not decide his conversion.

God in His mercy vouchsafed him many other striking warnings; and at length, convinced of the utter nothingness of the world, Bernard determined to devote himself to His service. For some time, however, his heart still remained divided between the pleasures he had resolved on renouncing, and the sacred duties to which he felt himself called. One day he was assailed by a most violent temptation, which he seemed to have no power of resisting; in his distress he fled for refuge to the church of St. Stephen de Grès, where, throwing himself at the feet of an image of our Lady,* he implored her succour and protection. His prayer was heard; the temptation instantly left him, and he made a general confession with deep compunction and an abundance of tears.

Soon afterwards he was ordained priest, and said his first Mass at the Hôtel Dieu, in the midst of the poor, to whom he determined henceforth to devote his whole life. The title he had disdained in the days of his frivolity now became the most honourable in his eyes; and it was his delight to be called "the poor priest," the name by which he was universally known in Paris.

* This was the image of our Lady of Deliverance, before which St. Francis de Sales received a similar favour.

A large fortune happening to be left to him, he did not hesitate to employ it in providing for the wants of his new children. In this way the whole soon disappeared; and he then began soliciting alms of the wealthy and charitable. His call was not confined simply to the poor; he also visited the prisons, carrying consolation to the wretched inmates, and accompanying condemned criminals to the scaffold. He seems to have had a particular compassion for these poor wretches, and his fervent zeal was often rewarded by most remarkable conversions.

Father Bernard's favourite prayer was that of his great namesake, the *Memorare*; he always carried it about with him, printed on small slips of paper, which he distributed every where. Many anecdotes have been told of this good priest in connection with this practice. One morning he was told that there lay in one of the prisons a man condemned to be broken on the wheel, who persisted in denying his crime and in refusing to see a priest. Bernard immediately hastened to his cell, tenderly embraced him, and used every possible argument calculated to soften the heart of the criminal and awaken him to repentance. All his efforts were vain. The prisoner did not so much as raise his eyes, or give the least sign of attention; he made no reply to the exhortations addressed to him, but sat motionless and obdurate on the stone bench of the prison. Bernard now determined to try the efficacy of his favourite prayer, and said to the prisoner, "Come, my brother, you will not refuse to say with me a little prayer to the Blessed Mother of God, to obtain her assistance at your last hour." The prisoner, however, remained in the same state of silent indifference.

"Well, then, I will say it alone," said the priest, while he knelt down by the side of the prisoner; "only do you join in my prayer by saying, Amen." Upon this he took one of his little prayers out of his breviary, and began to recite it aloud; and when he had finished he waited an instant to mark whether the

prisoner's heart had relented; but it was only to see a gesture of impatience, and to hear a brutal imprecation. Almost beside himself with grief and disappointment at the obduracy of this poor sinner, he exclaimed, "Well, since you will not repeat it, you shall swallow it;" and so saying he endeavoured to thrust the paper into the criminal's mouth. The man, whose hands and feet were loaded with chains, feeling himself unable to offer any opposition, at last consented to say the prayer in order to rid himself of this strange species of persecution. Scarcely had he finished when he burst into tears and said, "O, Father Bernard, do you remember having said to a monk of such a convent whom you met in the cloister, 'My brother, be of good courage; the Holy Virgin will save you'? It was I, wretch that I am. Become an apostate, I fell into every crime." He then made his confession with every token of deep penitence, and publicly proclaimed upon the scaffold the mercies of God and His blessed Mother.

This devoted servant of God never could hear the holy name blasphemed without absolute horror, and never failed to use every means in his power to check this fearful vice. One day a carter, enraged at Bernard's standing in his way, struck him a violent blow, swearing at him at the same time in the most frightful manner. "Friend," said the good priest, "strike me again if you will, but do not swear."

It is recorded that Cardinal Richelieu, who entertained a great esteem for Father Bernard, offered to bestow some ecclesiastical patronage upon him; but the good man would not hear of it. At last the cardinal said to him one day, "Tell me, then, any other way in which I can be of use to you, or any favour I can confer upon you." "I will avail myself," said the priest, "of your eminence's kindness so far as to ask that new planks may be placed in the cart in which the prisoners are conveyed to execution, so that their attention may not be distracted from their devotions by the fear of falling through the cart."

Father Bernard died on the 23d of March 1641, and was interred in the cemetery attached to the hospital for aged priests.

69.

PIETY OF A CHILD.

In one of the largest cities of France the child of very careless and irreligious parents was preparing for his first communion. He had never been taught to observe any days of fasting or abstinence; and in confession mentioned this to his director, who gave him rules for his future conduct, which he promised to obey. His firmness was soon put to the test; for the next Friday, as usual, there was nothing but meat on the table. The child quietly refused to eat any; and, on his father's questioning him, said that to do so on Friday was prohibited by the Church, but he would willingly eat dry bread. The father, irritated by the boy's resistance, bade him, with much harshness, go and shut himself up in his own room, and remain without any food at all until the next day. The child obeyed without murmuring, or the slightest appearance of ill-humour. But his mother, though as careless as her husband, felt compassion for the boy, and carried him some food secretly. Her surprise was great when the poor child replied cheerfully, "Dear mother, I cannot take what you have brought me, and disobey my father's orders. It was not from obstinacy that I refused to do what he wished, but my conscience would not allow me. I can stay here without any food till to-morrow; so do not be angry with me if I do not eat what you offer me." The mother, quite overcome at this evidence of high principle in her child, could not restrain her tears, and went to tell her husband all that had occurred. The man, struck with a conscientiousness and docility so unusual in a child, went immediately to his son, and

asked him who had advised him to live in such strict obedience to the laws of the Church. Hearing that it was in compliance with the wishes of his director, he went to the holy man, and expressed the gratitude he felt for the pious feeling he had instilled into his child, at the same time begging him to hear his own confession. From that time both he and his wife lived in a most regular and devout manner; and thus the child was the means of converting his parents and effectually reclaiming them from their irreligious ways.

70.

OUR LADY OF PUY.

Our Lady of Puy, in Velay, was considered the most ancient place of pilgrimage in France. Tradition says, that during the occupation of Gaul by the Romans, a Gallic lady, who had been baptised by St. George, the first Bishop of Puy, finding herself seriously ill, and being told that she would be restored to perfect health if she could reach the summit of Mount Anicium, not far distant from where she lived, immediately gave orders for her removal thither. Full of hope, she caused herself to be carried up the hill; and scarcely had she seated herself on the rock of Puy when a gentle slumber entranced her senses. Then she beheld in a dream a woman of celestial mien, her dress glittering and floating like a transparent cloud, and her head encircled with a crown of diamonds; she was of surpassing beauty, and attended by a troop of angelic spirits. "Who," asked she, "is that queen, so amiable, so majestic, and so lovely, who comes to me, a poor sufferer, in my trouble and affliction?" "She is the Mother of the Son of God," answered an angel; "she has chosen this rock as the place on which it is her will to be invoked, and she enjoins you to go and acquaint her servant George with her desire. And that you may not

take the command of Heaven for an idle dream, awake! lo, you are healed!" On returning to herself the lady felt her health and strength restored. Filled with gratitude, she hastened at once to the house of the bishop, and related to him the vision she had seen. After listening in silence to the commands of her who, next to God, was the object of his love, St. George bowed his head with filial submission, as if the Queen of Heaven had in person spoken to him, and immediately proceeded to visit the miraculous rock, accompanied by the lady and certain of his servants. No words could describe his amazement when he beheld it covered with snow, although the July heats were raging in the valley beneath. His wonder increased when a stag suddenly appeared, and, with his nimble feet, began to trace upon the summer snow what seemed to be the site of a vast edifice. The holy bishop, rightly interpreting the sign, enclosed with a strong fence the space which the stag had marked out. And soon, on this privileged spot, a cathedral rose, and around it grouped themselves the buildings of the city of Puy, considered impregnable under Mary's protection.

71.

ALAN OF THE ISLES.

In the twelfth century there was in the University of Paris a doctor of theology named Alan, who had gained immense renown in the schools for his learning and science. He had announced his intention of preaching on the mystery of the Blessed Trinity, and proposed to give his auditors a perfect knowledge of that most sacred doctrine. The day before his intended discourse, as he took a solitary walk on the margin of a stream, he saw a little boy scooping out a small trench, and trying with a shell to fill it with water, which escaped through the sandy bottom of the trench as fast as he

poured it in. "What are you doing, my sweet child?" asked Alan.

"I am going to put all the water of the river into this trench," was the reply.

"And how long do you think you will be," continued the philosopher, "before you succeed in your grand design?"

"I shall succeed before you will have performed what you have engaged to do."

"What have I engaged to do, child?"

"Why, you said that to-morrow you would, in a sermon, explain the mystery of the Trinity by your science."

Alan at this reply was seized with compunction and terror. He returned home absorbed in meditation, pondering upon the words so strangely addressed to him, and lamenting bitterly his own presumption. On the morrow, when the hour of the sermon arrived, a great crowd was assembled; Alan mounted the pulpit, and, as if to rebuke their curiosity and to ridicule his own self-sufficiency, instead of a theme he uttered these words, "*Sufficiat vobis vidisse Alanum*"—"Enough for you to have set eyes on Alan;" and immediately descending he withdrew from the church, leaving the people lost in astonishment. The same day he left Paris and travelled into Burgundy, where he repaired to the Abbey of Cîteaux, and offered himself as a poor lay brother to keep the sheep of the convent; and there he remained for a long time unknown.

After many years, when the Abbot Peter was about to set out for Rome to attend the Lateran Council, the poor lay brother begged permission to accompany him, saying that he might be of use in taking charge of the horses. The abbot consented, and they repaired to Rome together. On the day of the great disputation, when the abbot was proceeding to the council, Alan, being still at his side, asked whether he might enter along with him; but the abbot, in reply, told him to return to the stable, and attend to the horses, saying

that none but bishops and abbots and great clerks were admitted. He entreated him, however, to suffer him to glide in unobserved at his side; and the abbot consenting, he passed into the assembly, and sat down at his feet, where he listened to the disputation with the Albigenses and Waldenses. The heretics appearing at one stage of the discussion to have the best of the argument, Alan rose and said to the abbot, "*Jube, domne, benedicere*"—"Pray, sir, a blessing;" to which the other replied in amazement, "Madman, what art thou doing?" Then again he said meekly, "*Jube, domne, benedicere*," and repeated these words three times; till the Pope, observing what passed, called upon him to speak; when he began with such perspicacity and force of dialectics to confute the heretics, that it was immediately evident to all that the poor lay brother was more than he seemed. "*Aut diabolus es aut Alanus!*"—"Thou art either the devil or Alan!" exclaimed the furious disputant, enraged at finding himself worsted. "*Non sum ego diabolus, sed Alanus*"—"I am not the devil, but Alan," calmly rejoined the stranger. Thus was the long-lost doctor at last discovered. To describe the scene which ensued would be impossible. The abbot would have resigned his dignity to him on the spot, and Pope Alexander wished to confer great honours upon him; but Alan refused them all, and returned to his monastery. It was decreed, however, that he should have always two clerks under him to write down what he might dictate; and there he composed many learned books.

72.

THE PILGRIM'S DEATH.

The following interesting proof of ardent love and lively faith is related by St. Bernardine of Siena. A gentleman, well known for his fervour and piety, made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. He longed to visit

every spot that had received the impress of our Lord's sufferings; and after going to confession, and making his communion with great devotion, he set out on his travels. He first paused at Nazareth, where the great mystery of the Incarnation was accomplished; he then proceeded to Bethlehem, to kneel at the spot in which our Lord first deigned to visit this earth as a suffering infant; he walked by the banks of the Jordan, the scene of our Lord's baptism; and then went to the desert, which had witnessed that wonderful forty days' fast; to the mountain where Jesus was transfigured; to the house at Jerusalem consecrated by the institution of the Holy Eucharist; to the garden of Olives; to the pretorium; and to Calvary, where the awful sacrifice was consummated. He visited the scene of our Lord's burial and resurrection; and finally ascended Mount Olivet, fondly recalling the blessing which our Lord gave to the apostles before His ascension. He had visited every place which was in any way connected with our Lord's life or death, and then, with a heart glowing with love, exclaimed, "O Jesus, Jesus, my much-loved Saviour, since I can no longer follow Thy footsteps on earth, call me to Thyself in heaven." His prayer was immediately answered; for it was no sooner uttered than he expired. The intensity of his love had broken his heart; and after death these words were found engraven on his breast, "Jesus, my love."

73.

JAMES II. AND LA TRAPPE.

It was an autumn evening, in the eventful year 1690, that James II. of England rode up to the gate of the monastery of La Trappe, accompanied by a few of his friends, among whom was Lord Dumbarton. He was kindly received by the abbot, and after partaking of his frugal hospitality, attended evening service in the chapel. After communicating on the following

morning, and inspecting the respective occupations of the monks, he proceeded to visit a recluse, who lived some distance up the mountains. His solitude was never interrupted, save by an occasional visit from his abbot; and he spent the greater part of his time in prayer and meditation. In the recluse, James immediately recognised an officer who had formerly distinguished himself in the royal army. He asked him at what time in the winter mornings he heard Mass in the chapel of the monastery, and was answered, at half-past three. "Surely," remarked Lord Dumbarton, "that is impossible; the way is dark and dreary, and at that hour is highly dangerous." "Ah," replied the old soldier, "I have served my king in frost and snow, by night and day, for many a year; and I should blush indeed, if I were not to do as much for the Master who has now called me to His service, and whose uniform I wear." The afflicted monarch turned away his head. His attendants remarked that his eyes were filled with tears. On his departure the following day, he knelt to receive the abbot's blessing, and on rising, leaned for support on the arm of a monk who was near him. On looking to express his thanks, he saw in him another of his followers, the Honourable Robert Graham. He, too, had been an officer in his army, and had lost a splendid fortune in his service. The king spoke a few words of kindly recollection; even the solitudes of La Trappe were filled with the ruins of his greatness. These visits he repeated each year as long as he was able; and to his dying day he cherished a most grateful remembrance of the benefit which he derived from the edifying lives of the abbot and the community.

In the first year of his reign, Louis XVI. said to his courtiers, "Lent has not done me much harm this

year; but next year I shall be of age, and obliged to fast." "O, no, sire," exclaimed one of his attendants, "you cannot possibly fast; no one can fast and hunt too." "Hunting," replied the king, "is simply an amusement; and I should give it up directly if it prevented my obeying the commands of the Church."

When, in after years, this monarch was in the power of ruffians, who took a sacrilegious delight in testifying their contempt for the Church, and heaping every manner of insult on their sovereign, they took care to give him nothing but flesh-meat on Fridays. The king on these occasions never complained, but pouring out a glass of water, soaked some bread in it, and turning to his jailers, would say quietly, "This must be my dinner to-day."

75.

MADAME ELIZABETH IN PRISON.

Madame Elizabeth, sister of the unfortunate Louis XVI., shared all the sorrows of her unhappy brother. She remained in prison with her niece, the Duchess d'Angoulême, after the murder of the king and queen. One of the few requests she ever made to her relentless persecutors was, to allow her meagre food on abstinence-days; but, ridiculing her wish as a superstitious folly, they refused to comply. One of the jailers said to her one day, "Don't you know that all days are alike now, and that in the new division of time weeks are done away with?" adding insultingly, "but I believe you know nothing of what has been decreed; and as to there being any difference in days, only children or fools believe in that now." She made no reply; but when Lent came, she fasted regularly, though no meagre food was supplied. She ate no breakfast, but the cup of coffee that was allowed her, she reserved for her dinner; and in the evening she ate only dry bread.

GOD'S VENGEANCE ON SACRILEGE.

On Mount Benedict, one mile from Charlestown, a suburb of Boston in America, was a convent of Ursuline nuns, with a school attached, which had been established by Bishop de Cheverus, afterwards Archbishop of Bourdeaux, and cardinal. The institution was in a flourishing condition, when, on the night of the 14th August 1834, the Puritan populace, led on by some of their fanatical preachers, rose as one man, and with cries of fury and vengeance rushed towards the convent. The inmates were wrapped in unconscious slumber, when suddenly they were aroused by a violent noise and tumult without, and by the smashing of the windows and doors, which fell beneath the blows of the infuriated crowd; and before the nuns or their pupils had time to hurry on their clothes, the flames began to burst from their peaceful dwelling. They made their escape, as best they could, in a state of half-nakedness, while their brutal assailants were engaged in plundering the church and convent; and soon the flames enveloped the whole range of buildings, which were utterly destroyed.

In the midst of the uproar, one of the fanatics had mounted on the altar; and (horrible to relate) with sacrilegious hand he seized the holy ciborium, emptied the sacred particles into his pocket, and, swelled with satanic pride, betook himself to a public-house at Charlestown. There, surrounded by a throng of eager listeners, he was giving a boastful account of his impious exploit, when his eye lighted on an Irishman whom he knew to be a Catholic, and who regarded him with a countenance full of indignation and horror. Suddenly the wretched man drew from his pocket several of the consecrated Hosts, and in a sneering tone, "Here," said he, as he held them up, "behold your God! why need you go any more to seek Him in your

church?" The Catholic remained mute with awe; at the same instant a sudden paleness overspread the features of the unhappy scoffer, and he hastily left the room. A quarter of an hour, half an hour elapsed, and yet he did not return. A vague fear seized on the bystanders; with a presentiment for which they could not account, they went in search of him; they found him lying on the ground dead,—dead by the death of Arius.

The panic of the Protestants was indescribable; the Irishman now strode forward, and adoring in his heart the justice of God which had so speedily smitten the guilty, he cut away the pocket containing the sacred particles, and leaving the spectators as though they were chained by their terror to the tainted corpse, he ran to the cathedral, where he tremblingly consigned into the hands of the bishop, Dr. Fenwick, the tremendous deposit of which he had secured possession.

This extraordinary fact, which forms so striking an episode in the history of the desecrated convent, rests on the authority of eye-witnesses, some of whom were Protestants at the time, and have since become Catholics; and was known to the whole population of Charlestown and Boston.

The outrage would have been direfully revenged by the Irish Catholics, but for the eloquence and personal exertions of the bishop, who from the steps of the cathedral addressed more than twenty thousand excited men, who had assembled to obtain his sanction and blessing before making reprisals on the enemies of the faith. With a single gesture he allayed the fury of the vast assembly, and so wrought upon them by his wise and affectionate counsels that the multitude melted away in silence before the eyes of the Protestants, who were astonished no less at the power exercised by a Catholic bishop over a faithful people, than at the moderation and charity he displayed on an occasion calculated to arouse feelings of the fiercest indignation and resentment.

77.

ST. JOHN THE ALMONER.

A nobleman of Alexandria was living in deadly enmity with one of his neighbours, and St. John the almoner had tried in vain to bring about a reconciliation. He at last made use of the following means to induce this implacable man to forgive his adversary. He invited the nobleman to visit him, and taking him into his private chapel, he offered up the Holy Sacrifice in his presence, forbidding any one to enter except the server. When they repeated the Lord's Prayer aloud, according to the custom of those times, the saint made a sign to the server not to repeat the words, "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us;" he accordingly remained silent, and the nobleman repeated them alone. Then John, turning towards him, said mildly, "Think, I beseech you, on what you have just said; you have called God to witness your forgiveness of all who have offended you." The words came upon him like a clap of thunder. He threw himself at the feet of the saint, and exclaimed, "I forgive with all my heart, and will do whatever you require me." He put his good resolution into practice at once; and seeing his enemy, he became completely reconciled to him.

78.

RELIGION IN ITALY.

A Catholic gentleman was on an excursion to Pæstum with a Protestant friend, who often descanted on the superstition and ignorance of the Italians; and certainly no spot could appear more likely to justify his ideas than the immense unwholesome plain over which they were journeying, the inhabitants of which, one would naturally suppose, must be debarred from all

chance of religious instruction. A little boy mounted behind the carriage, and offered to be their guide to the ruins; his dress and appearance sufficiently bespoke his poverty. To him it was determined to refer the subject of discussion. "Do you love the Madonna?" was the first question asked. The little fellow's eyes sparkled with animation and affection as he answered in the affirmative. "Who redeemed the Madonna?" he was then asked. "Her own Son," was the reply. "Could she have redeemed you?" "Not unless her Son commanded her." The Protestant gentleman (who often afterwards spoke of his "little Pæstum theologian") owned himself surprised and corrected. The love of that child for the Mother of God seemed unbounded; but he well knew her to be a creature dependent on her Son, and by Him redeemed.

79.

MARTYRS OF THE SACRED HEART.

Amidst the horrors of the French revolution, the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus was of inestimable value in keeping up the courage of Catholics. One fact which is recorded in the terrible annals of the time is sufficient to prove this. It shows how religion was preserved in France during the reign of terror. While Carrier was deluging Nantes with blood, a gentleman named De la Billière, with his wife and two unmarried daughters, was lying in the revolutionary prisons. He was accused of having harboured a Catholic priest in his house, was condemned, and perished on the scaffold. His wife and daughters were dragged before the same tribunal; but not even malice and calumny could find a pretext against them. The witnesses did not agree together. At last it was proved that they had distributed pictures of the Sacred Heart among the pea-

santry on the estate around their château. They were immediately condemned, and shed their blood with the greatest joy for the love of Jesus.

80.

THE AFRICAN CONFESSORS.

Huneric king of the Vandals was, like his father Genseric, an Arian, and inflicted most horrible sufferings upon the Catholics of the African coast. The colony of Tipasa especially distinguished itself by its zeal for the faith, and constancy under persecution. Rather than acknowledge an heretical bishop, the inhabitants abandoned the town; all who could find means of transport crossed over to the shores of Spain; while the remainder, refusing to hold any communion with the intruder, met together for religious worship in secret places. Their fidelity to God exasperated the cruelty of the tyrant. He despatched a military commissary from Carthage to Tipasa, who collected the Catholics in the market-place, and, in the presence of the whole province, struck off their right hands, and cut out their tongues, that they might no longer bear witness to the truth. But, although deprived of the organ of speech, these holy confessors, sixty in number, continued to speak without tongues, and with perfect articulation to proclaim the divinity of Him for whom they gladly suffered such cruel mutilation.

Flying from their persecutor, some of them went to Constantinople, where the miracle was witnessed by thousands, and is attested by various writers, themselves eye-witnesses, whose testimony still remains. Victor, Bishop of Vite, says, their tongues were cut out by the roots, yet they spoke like educated men, without any impediment. Oneas of Gaza, a philosopher and rhetorician, thus expresses himself: "I myself saw the men, and heard them speak without a tongue more

plainly than before; and wondering at the articulateness of the sound, I began to inquire what its organ was; and, distrusting my ears, I committed the decision to my eyes. I opened their mouth, and perceived the tongue gone from the roots; and, astounded, I fell to wondering, not how they could talk, but how they had not died." Procopius of Cæsarea, secretary to Belisarius, declares that they "talked without impediment, feeling no effects whatever from the mutilation." The Emperor Justinian bears similar testimony. Pope Gregory the First says, that "it appeared to those who inspected, as if, their tongues being cut off from the roots, there was a sort of open depth in their throat; and yet in that empty mouth the words were formed full and perfect." Count Marcellinus, chancellor, affirms that "one of the confessors was a youth who had been dumb from his birth, yet after his tongue was cut out he spoke distinctly, and with the first sounds of his voice gave glory to Jesus as God." Lastly, Victor, the schismatical Bishop of Tonno, attests that they "spoke perfectly, even to the end." In fact, the miraculous gift continued through their lives; with two remarkable exceptions, in the case of men who, falling into licentiousness, lost without recovery the power of speech.

81.

ST. CLARE AND THE BLESSED SACRAMENT.

The impious emperor, Frederic II., cruelly ravaged the valley of Spoleto, because it belonged to the patrimony of the Holy See. There were in his army many Saracens and other barbarians, and he left a colony of 20,000 of these ferocious enemies of the faith in a place still called after them Noura des Moros. They had not long been settled there when they came in a great body to plunder the town of Assisi; and as St. Clare's

convent stood without the walls, it was the first to be assaulted. Whilst the infidels were engaged in the very act of scaling the walls, the saint, though greatly afflicted with sickness, caused herself to be carried to the gate of the monastery; then she desired the Blessed Sacrament to be brought to the spot; and there, in the very sight of the assailants, who had mounted the walls, and were rushing down with savage cries upon their defenceless prey, she prostrated herself before It, and with many tears implored the protection of the Spouse of her soul. "O my God," she cried, "is it possible that Thou shouldst have assembled these Thy servants in this holy house, and have nurtured them in Thy Divine love, only that they should fall into the power of Thy enemies? Preserve them, O my God, and me in their holy company, from these infidel Moors." As she ended her prayer, she seemed to hear a sweet and gentle voice, which said, "I will never forsake you." At the same instant, a sudden and unaccountable panic seized upon the assailants; they fled precipitately from the walls, and such were their terror and confusion, that many of them were grievously wounded, although no man attacked or pursued them.

THE JUDGE AND THE SWINEHERD.

John Parent was a native of Carmignano, near Pistoia; he was a lawyer of great note, first magistrate of Fescennia, and for his distinguished services he had granted to him the rights and privileges of a Roman citizen. As he was walking one evening in the environs of the town, he saw a swineherd endeavouring to drive his pigs into a shed; instead of going in, the animals dispersed themselves in all directions, at which the man flew into a passion, and called out to them, "In wi' ye, as fast as judges run into hell!" He had scarcely said the words when the pigs went quietly in. The

coincidence made so strong an impression on the magistrate's mind, that, seriously reflecting on the dangers and responsibilities of a judge, he almost immediately afterwards threw up his office, and retired to Florence. There he met with St. Francis of Assisi, and was so filled with admiration of his conduct and virtues, that he felt himself called by God to imitate him. His only son received the grace of a similar vocation; and united together in the same holy purpose, they forthwith divided all they had among the poor, and became disciples of the saint.

John Parent became celebrated in the Franciscan Order for the holiness of his life, and the brilliancy of his talents. He was elected general in the year 1230, and governed it with great prudence. He made all his visitations on foot, and in many parts of Europe bare-footed.

83.

OUR LADY OF ROC-AMADOUR.

In the third century, a holy man, named Amadour, constructed on a solitary rock, in a district of Auvergne, a little sanctuary dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, called from him Roc-Amadour. It became afterwards a celebrated place of pilgrimage, and in the eighth century was visited by devout persons from all parts of the world. Many rich offerings were brought to the shrine, and hung around its simple wooden altar; and in course of time, a body of religious attached themselves to the service of the church, and a town sprang up near it.

Many miracles are recorded to have been wrought by our Lady of Roc-Amadour, one of which is as follows:

About the beginning of the last century, a man, who in his early youth had made a pilgrimage to Roc-Amadour, happened to be travelling on horseback along

a very dangerous road cut out of the rock, and overhanging a steep precipice. A violent storm arising, he was obliged to stop and dismount; but just as he was in the act of withdrawing his foot from the stirrup, it became entangled, and he could not succeed in gaining the ground. In trying to disengage his foot, he struck his spur into the horse's side, which caused the animal to set off at a furious gallop along the rocks, leaping headlong over deep chasms, and every moment threatening to dash itself and its rider to pieces. In this extremity, the terrified horseman bethought him of our Lady of Roc-Amadour, and implored her help with all the fervour of a dying man. Scarcely had he raised his heart in prayer when he felt his eyes close, and a dreamy sensation steal over him. On coming to himself, he found that he was in perfect safety, and standing upright upon his feet, while far below him, at the bottom of a tremendous precipice, he perceived the dead body of his horse. Devoutly making the sign of the cross, he hastened immediately to Roc-Amadour to pay his vows, and offer his thanksgivings to our Lady for his wonderful preservation.

84.

LUTHER REVISITING ERFURT.

On the eve of Palm Sunday, Luther, on his way to the diet of Worms, alighted at the convent of the Augustins, where, a few years before, he had taken the habit. It was nightfall: a little wooden cross over the tomb of a friar whom he had known, and who had lately departed to the Lord, struck his attention, and troubled his soul. He was himself no longer the poor monk, travelling on foot and begging his bread. His power equalled that of Charles V., and all men had their eyes on him. That morning, on his march, he had sung the famous war-hymn which Heyne calls the Marseillaise of the Reformation; and the emperor was

about to resist him, as he said in his imperial rescript, "though at the peril of his own blood, of his dignity, and of the fortune of the empire." The triumphant innovator was recalled to himself for an instant by seeing the tomb of a faithful brother. He pointed it out to his companion, Doctor Jonas: "See, there he rests; and I"—he could not finish. After a little while he returned to it, and sat down on the stone, where he remained more than an hour, and till he was reminded that the convent-bell had tolled the hour for sleep. Well might the heart in which such tempests were gathering be oppressed with gloom at the sight of that peaceful grave!

85.

THE MISSIONER'S DANCE.

A celebrated French priest, named Morcain, was on his way to give a mission in a certain town notorious for its dissoluteness and irreligion. The inhabitants determined upon giving him such a reception as should effectually discourage him from carrying his intention into effect, and went out to meet him in a body, singing a parody of the popular song,

"O 'tis love, 'tis love, 'tis love
That makes the world go round!"

to this effect,

"O 'tis Morcain, 'tis Morcain, 'tis Morcain
That damns the world all round!"

The unsuspecting missioner came quietly along in his vehicle, probably meditating on the subject of his opening discourse, when he suddenly found himself in the midst of this delectable mob, who began dancing around him with renewed vociferations and bursts of laughter. However, they had met with their match. The good man, nothing daunted, stepped from his carriage, sprang into the middle of the crowd, and joining

hands with the rest, commenced dancing in the most spirited style; taking up the chorus from time to time as heartily as any of them, "O 'tis Morcain, 'tis Morcain, 'tis Morcain that damns the world all round!" Away he went, dancing and singing, reverend missionary as he was, and all the mad and giddy crowd capering round him, till they reached the door of the church, into which he also danced with all the agility imaginable, carrying the multitude with him. Once within the door, he was on his own ground, and straightway mounting the pulpit, he preached them *such* a sermon, that they were soon weeping and beating their breasts instead of singing and dancing. At the end of his sermon he proclaimed, that if during the mission any one who had sung that song wanted to go to confession, he had only to cry out, *Monsieur, j'ai chanté le Morcain*, and he should be heard immediately before any one else. And so it was: ever and anon during the mission, from the outermost edge of huge crowds of women and others, no matter what was going on, there would come in a loud voice the appointed signal, *Monsieur, j'ai chanté le Morcain*; a passage was formed; every one gave way; the man pressed through the throng, and throwing himself at the feet of the priest, made his confession with tears of compunction, and departed absolved from his sins, and at peace with God.

ST. EDMUND'S VISION.

St. Edmund, Archbishop of Canterbury, was born of poor parents at Abingdon. When a boy he would withdraw himself from his companions, and walk alone to meditate. One day, when he had thus left his playfellows, and was walking alone in a meadow, entertaining himself with devout aspirations and affections, he met a child of most celestial beauty, who saluted him

familiarly. When Edmund expressed surprise, the child said, "How is it you do not recognise Me, for I am always by your side? If, however, you would know who I am, look what is written on My forehead." Edmund looked and read, "*Jesus Nazarenus, Rex Judæorum*"—"Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews". The child then added, "This is My Name; and I desire that in remembrance of the love I bear thee, thou shouldst every night sign thy forehead with this Name; and it shall deliver thee from sudden death, as it will also deliver every one who shall do the same." Edmund ever after, on going to bed, wrote with his finger the Name of Jesus on his forehead, and exhorted others to follow the same practice.

A STORY OF THE CONFESSIONAL.

Two young men agreed to meet at a particular hour at a certain church in Rome, and make their confession to a very holy priest, after which they were to take a walk together. One of them repaired to the church at the appointed time; and as the other had not made his appearance, he proceeded to make his confession, in the hopes that he should find his friend arrived when he had concluded. When he had finished the recital of his sins, he became aware that the priest was paying no attention; and at length, becoming alarmed, he opened the door of the confessional, and discovered him apparently in a heavy sleep, or rather stupor. He lost no time in summoning assistance; but it was long before the priest revived, and he then appeared reluctant to speak of the extraordinary lethargy into which he had fallen, or to make any further allusion to the subject. The young man, after leaving the church, went straight to his friend's house, and there learnt, to his extreme sorrow and astonishment, that he had but just expired, and that he was attended in his last moments by the

very priest to whom he had himself been making his confession at the time he died! Then the young man knew that God had sent His servant in the hour of need, that a faithful child of Holy Church might not pass through his final conflict without the fortifying aid of the divine Sacraments.

88.

NAPOLEON'S HAPPIEST DAY.

When Napoleon was in the height of his prosperity, and surrounded by a brilliant company of the marshals and courtiers of the empire, he was asked what day he considered to have been the happiest of his life. When all expected that he would name the occasion of some glorious victory, or some great political triumph, or some august celebration, or other signal recognition of his genius and power, he answered without a moment's hesitation, "The happiest day of my life was the day of my first communion." At a reply so unforeseen there was a general silence; when he added, as if to himself, "I was then an innocent child."

89.

ST. PHILIP AND THE STUDENT.

Francisco Zarrara, when a youth, was preparing for the bar, and took great pains in his studies with a view to advancing to high honours in his profession. One day St. Philip Neri called him to him, and as the young man knelt at his feet, he said to him caressingly, "O happy you! You are a student now; by and by you will be made a doctor, and will begin to make money, and attract people to you; after that you will be an advocate, and then some day you may become a

judge;" and so he went on, describing step by step all the honours the world could confer upon him, or which could have passed through the youth's imagination, repeating again, "O happy you, when you have obtained all you desire, and will want nothing more!" Francisco thought the saint was in earnest; but at last Philip drew the young student close to him, and whispered in his ear, "*And then?*" The words remained so deeply impressed upon the youth's mind that as he went home he began saying to himself, "I study that I may get on in the world; *and then?*" Thus reflecting within himself, he found he could not get the words out of his mind; and at last he resolved to turn all his thoughts and designs to God—a resolution which he carried into effect by entering the Congregation of the Oratory, where he gave great edification to all who knew him, and died in the odour of sanctity.

90.

THE EMPEROR'S HEIR.

The Emperor Conrad II. spared none who disturbed the peace of the empire, and caused many turbulent nobles to be put to death. Count Leopold, fearing to be involved in the same destruction, fled into a remote part of the Black Forest, and there lived in a hut with his wife. It happened that the emperor while hunting came to the cottage, and asked shelter for the night. The count recognised his sovereign, but Conrad knew not his old servant, nor was he recognised by any of his train. That night Leopold's wife brought forth a son; and the emperor dreamed that a child then born would be his heir. As the same dream recurred three times, he was greatly troubled; and next morning, when he was informed by his attendants that the wife of the poor woodman had had a son while he slept, he commanded two of his squires to kill the child, and

bring its heart to him. The men tore the babe from its mother's arms. She was alone, for her husband had gone into the wood to his daily labour; but the smiles of the little creature moved them to compassion; they placed the child on the branch of a tree, and brought back a hare's heart to the emperor. A certain duke passed that way soon after, and finding the child where the servants had placed it, took it home to his wife and adopted it as his own.

Long after, the emperor, being in the company of this duke, heard him relate the strange adventure he had had years before in the forest, when he found the youth, then a babe, who was there present; whereupon Conrad began to suspect that he had been deceived. His suspicions grew so strong upon him that, in order to have him in his power, he took him into his service as a page. Nor was it long before he determined to have him removed out of his way, so as effectually to prevent the realisation of his dream. Accordingly one day he called the youth to him, and bade him carry to the empress a letter of the utmost importance, which he put into his hands. It ran thus: "As soon as this reaches you, I charge you to cause the bearer thereof to be put to death. See that this be done, as you fear my displeasure." The youth set out forthwith, and, after travelling seven days, came to a certain priest's house, who received him hospitably. The priest was struck by his comely appearance, and at his journeying so far alone; and moved, he knew not why, by some inexplicable curiosity, he extracted the letter from the silken bag in which it was enclosed, and, opening its folds, read the contents, and discovered the miserable fate that awaited the unsuspecting bearer. Hereupon he erased the writing, and substituted in its place these words: "The bearer of this is the youth whom I have chosen for the husband of our daughter. I charge you to give her to him in marriage as soon as this reaches you." Next morning the lad awoke refreshed, and said, "Adieu, dear host;" who replied, "Remember me when you

are king." The boy laughed at the pleasant jest, and departed on his way.

On arriving at Aix-la-Chapelle the youth delivered the letter; and so well did the stratagem succeed, that when the emperor wrote soon afterwards to ask if his orders had been obeyed, the empress assured him that the nuptials had been solemnised with all the celerity he desired. Conrad could not believe his eyes when he read this reply; mounting his horse, he rode off immediately, and travelled with the utmost speed to Aix-la-Chapelle. On his arrival the empress presented their daughter and son-in-law. For a long time Conrad was lost in astonishment, and uncertain what to do. At length nature, or rather grace, prevailed, and he exclaimed, "The will of God cannot be resisted." Deeply penitent for his many offences against God and man, he confirmed the marriage of his daughter; and having compelled the two squires to reveal what they had done, he recalled Count Leopold from his retreat in the Black Forest, and proclaimed the youth his heir, who, in fact, succeeded him as Henry III.

91.

OUR LADY OF CARMEL OF GUELDRES.

During the religious commotions of the sixteenth century the Protestants, or *Gueux* (as they were called in the Low Countries), finding that the city of Gueldres, which remained steadfast to the ancient faith, was deprived of its garrison, which was called off to another point menaced by the enemy, came one night and laid siege to the town.

On their awaking in the morning, the worthy townsmen beheld their homes assailed by a band of armed ruffians; and as there were neither troops nor ammunition in the place, the governor and magistrates saw that they could not possibly hold out for more than two

days. A consultation, however, was held as to the best course to be pursued in the emergency, and various opinions were advanced, some being eager for defending the city as long as it was practicable.

"It is true," said the governor, at last, "that if the enemy effect an entrance we shall be deprived of our greatest blessing, religion; our churches will be profaned, and our religious and clergy insulted. Still, I cannot recommend having recourse to arms; we are too few and too weak."

"But," said one of the councillors, "if God be for us, what matter how many are against us? Yesterday we honoured by a procession our Lady of Mount Carmel, the patroness of our city; she has protected other places in time of need; let us too have recourse to her in our present extremity."

All assented to this advice; and the governor and citizens proceeded, in solemn procession, to the Carmelite church, where the former, taking the keys of the city, advanced towards the altar, and deposited them at the feet of the holy image. Then, kneeling before it, he prayed thus aloud: "O holy Virgin, Mother of the God of battles, Defender of the Church, whose faithful children we are; you are our only defence, our strength, and our refuge. Our enemies are also yours; you know their designs. If they prevail, they will outrage our sanctuary, profane our temples, and proscribe our holy worship; avert this terrible evil from us, O powerful Queen! The keys of the city we confide to your protection. You will defend us; for God, the ruler of all men, can refuse you nothing."

As he finished this prayer the city became enveloped in such a dense fog that it seemed as if night had suddenly fallen; while a heavy rain, or rather a deluge, came down in torrents, accompanied by such a furious hurricane of wind that no one could stir abroad. The river overflowed, and turned the meadows into vast lakes.

This storm lasted three hours, after which the wea-

ther becoming bright and calm, the people of Gueldres left the church, and went to the ramparts. Here they saw the city wall encircled by an immense ditch filled with deep water, forming a complete defence all round; the *Gueux* had disappeared, and had left all their baggage and ammunition behind them, which thus fell into the possession of the city. The enemy's banners, and other trophies, were offered at the shrine of our Lady of Carmel.

It was said, too, that the fugitives saw a figure in the air with a flaming sword, which drove them from the walls. In memory of this remarkable deliverance the people of Gueldres established an annual procession, which was terminated by a solemn act of thanksgiving in the church of the Carmelites.

ST. AMBROSE AND THE EMPEROR THEODOSIUS.

In the year 390 a tumult took place in Thessalonica which ended in the murder of the commander of the imperial forces, who had offended the people, and other officers. The first burst of the emperor's indignation was overcome by the interposition of the clergy, particularly Ambrose; and he promised to pardon the Thessalonians. But his ministers considered the outrage too great to be passed over with safety, and succeeded in obtaining the emperor's consent to the terrible reprisal which they proposed. Their purpose was kept profoundly secret; the unsuspecting populace were invited to be present on an appointed day at some races in the circus. When they were assembled, they were surrounded in silence by a large body of soldiery; and at the moment when they expected the spectacle to commence, a signal was given, and a promiscuous massacre ensued. It continued for three hours; and seven thousand, without discrimination of age or sex, are said to have been slaughtered. Theodosius had revoked the

cruel order soon after it was given, but too late to prevent its execution.

When the emperor returned to Milan, the holy archbishop retired in deep affliction into the country, from whence he addressed to him a letter written rather with the affectionate familiarity of a friend than with the measured precision of an ecclesiastical censure. In it he besought him, after the pattern of David, to do public penance for a deed of atrocity unparalleled, as he said, in history; and warned him that, should he venture to assist at the holy sacrifice, he must refuse to offer it in his presence.

In spite, however, of this remonstrance Theodosius proceeded to the church, where Ambrose, who had returned to the city, was about to celebrate the sacred mysteries; but he was met at the entrance by the man of God, who thus addressed him: "Surely your majesty is not aware of the heinousness of the slaughter which has taken place. Passion is over; yet reason does not yet estimate the enormity of the crime. Perchance kingly rule is an obstacle to repentance, and sovereignty prevents reflection. Yet it is as well for a man to feel his perishable nature, and remember that dust is his beginning and his end, in spite of that gorgeous purple which may beguile the heart, but cannot reverse the feebleness of the frame it covers. Your subjects, emperor, are your fellow-creatures; I should rather say, your fellow-servants—servants of one universal Lord and King, the Maker of the universe. Dare you, then, look upon His shrine, who is Lord of low as well as high? Dare you tread His holy pavement? Dare you stretch forth hands yet reeking with the blood of innocent victims? Dare you receive in them the most holy Body of your Lord? Dare you taste His precious Blood with lips which have uttered their rage in an unjust slaughter? Go hence; add not a new offence to what is past; submit to the load which is placed upon you, according to the will of the Most High. Take it as medicine to restore your soul."

Theodosius yielded to the voice of the Church; he retired home, where he remained suspended from Christian communion for eight months.

When Christmas was come the emperor made a second attempt to join in public worship with the faithful, considering that he had now done sufficient penance for his crime. "Slaves and beggars," he said with tears, "may enter freely, but against me the gates of heaven are shut; for well I know what the Lord has said, 'Whom ye bind shall be bound in heaven.'" His minister Ruffinus persuaded him to let him go to Ambrose; but Theodosius, impatient at his delay, set out towards the church before his return. He had got as far as the forum, when he was met by his minister, who reported to him the ill success of his mission; on which, with a noble resolution, he declared he would proceed onwards, and undergo the shame which he had deserved.

He betook himself to the bishop's apartments, and there expressed his readiness to undergo a public penance. He promised also to pass a law that thirty days should in future intervene between sentence and execution, in all cases of death and confiscation. On these terms he was formally reconciled to the Church.

His first appearance in public worship, after his absolution, had itself the character of a penance. With all the signs of vehement grief he prostrated himself upon the ground, and applied to his own situation those words of the Psalmist, "My soul hath cleaved to the pavement: quicken Thou me according to Thy word." It so happened, when the time came for the consecration, instead of retiring from the chancel, he remained, through forgetfulness, within the rails, according to the custom of the Eastern Church, there to receive communion. Ambrose ventured not to relax one tittle of the customary discipline, even to reward a penitent monarch. He sent his archdeacon to signify to him that none but ordained persons were allowed to remain within the sanctuary; on which the emperor promptly retired.

Theodoret adds, that, on his return to Constantinople, one day, after making his offering at the altar as usual, Theodosius retired, as he had been used to do at Milan, outside the chancel, and was recalled by the Patriarch Nectarius : upon which he observed, "Of all whom I have met, Ambrose is the only bishop."

93.

SISTER ROSALIE.

Among the numerous anecdotes related of this remarkable woman, showing the multiplicity of her resources and the extraordinary confidence reposed in her by all manner of persons, occurs the following. One day a poor man, to whom she had already rendered many offices of kindness, came to her and said, "I am ruined ; my horse is dead ; and what shall I do to get bread for my wife and children?" for in the little business he carried on, a horse was necessary to him. The good sister did her best to console him ; but the poor man kept repeating, "What shall I do to get another horse ? and without a horse how can I get bread for my children?" Rosalie recounted many instances in which Providence had come to the aid of those who were in want ; and at last she said, "Trust in God, and pray to the Blessed Virgin. I will keep you in mind, and come again to me in two days' time." The poor man goes away ; he knows well that the sister is very powerful ; but then, a horse is an important affair. Rosalie, however, did not forget him ; she sought out one of her numerous friends in a distant quarter of the city, and said to him, "You have often told me to have recourse to you when I wanted something more than usual, and here I am."

"What is it you want?"

"I want a horse."

"Well, go into my stables, and make your choice."

“But your horses won't serve my purpose; I want a horse for draught.”

“Then go and suit yourself, and I will pay for him.”

Sister Rosalie was a woman of business, and never wasted her time. She went forthwith to the horse-market, not far from the street where she lived. She had friends every where and in every class, and she soon found one she could depend upon for choosing her a horse. The next morning the poor man found a horse standing ready for him at the door of the convent, and the rich man paid for him.

The influence, or rather it might be called authority, exercised by Sister Rosalie over the population inhabiting the most wretched and most abandoned quarter of Paris, the Faubourg St. Marceau, was truly wonderful. During the terrible days of June 1848, an unfortunate *garde-mobile*, pursued by the insurgents, fled for refuge within the precincts of the house of the Sisters of Charity in the Rue de l'Épée-de-Bois, to which Rosalie belonged. The mob followed him; when, throwing herself between the assailants and their intended victim, she said firmly, “We will have no killing here.”

“No, mother,” they answered, “not here; we will take him out, and shoot him in the street.”

“Then you will shoot me too,” answered the sister.

It was enough. A word from one so beloved for her charity and virtues sufficed to stay these ruffians' thirst for blood, and the man was saved.

On another occasion, in the same *émeute*, she was enabled to render a similar service. A poor wretch was being hunted down the street with a ferocity which left him little hope of escape, when, on turning a corner, he found himself in the presence of Sister Rosalie, who was tending and consoling a dying man pending the arrival of the priest. She rose from her knees, and confronting the pursuers, who would have rushed upon the object of their vengeance and instantly killed him,

she said, "Brothers, this man belongs to me; I demand him of you."

"Impossible!" they exclaimed. "You know we would let ourselves be cut in pieces for you; but to-day we must have our own way. The man you would save is a monster; his life is forfeited, and we must and will have it."

Nothing daunted, however, Rosalie replied, "Brothers, I tell you again, you shall not touch him. If he is as bad as you say, the more reason for giving him time to repent. Come," she continued, "be reasonable, be men. *You* are not monsters; and to-morrow, when you are come to your senses, you will be the first to bless me for having saved you from this crime. Now listen," she added, seeing that their excitement prevented them from attending; "it is my first request; and you know I have been your servant these many years, and will continue to be so as long as I live: give me this poor wretch, and I will thank you with all my heart."

"Ah, sister," they cried, "you can do any thing with us: we can refuse you nothing. Take him, and much good may he do you."

On account of these courageous acts, and, above all, for her heroic devotion to the poor, Sister Rosalie was decorated with the Cross of the Legion of Honour by the emperor himself. She died in the present year, 1856, at the age of sixty-nine, of which fifty-four had been dedicated to the service of God in His poor; for she had joined the Sisters of Charity when only fifteen. Crowds sought to touch with a medal or a rosary the venerated remains, while they lay exposed in the chapel of the institute; and a vast multitude filled the church in which the funeral Mass was said, and accompanied her body to the tomb. For the first time since the great revolution the cross was seen at the head of the procession; for, though carried publicly in country places, the civic authorities had hitherto forbidden its display in the streets of Paris.

ST. ANDREW CORSINI.

St. Andrew Corsini affords one example, among a thousand, of the graces which the Blessed Virgin procures for those who are devoted to her. Before he was born, his father and mother had, unknown to each other, made a vow before an image of Our Lady in the church of the Carmelites at Florence, to dedicate their first child to the service of God; but there seemed little hope that Andrew would allow them to fulfil their pious intentions; for, from the time that he was twelve years old, he was licentious, reckless, and disobedient. He led a most careless life for more than three years; at the end of which his mother said to him one day, when he had been speaking to her in a most insolent manner, "I see, my son, that you are the wolf I dreamed of." "What do you mean?" answered the boy; "how am I a wolf?" His mother then told him that the night before he was born she dreamed she had brought a wolf into the world, which, on entering a church, was changed into a lamb. "But you do not belong to us," she added, "for we have given you up entirely to our Blessed Lady; and, O my child, disdain not to serve so amiable and powerful a mistress." These words made so deep an impression on the boy, that he thought of them all night, and begged Mary to procure for him the pardon of his sins, and grace that he might change his life. The next morning found him, at an early hour, on his knees before the image of Our Lady: "Glorious Virgin Mother," he said, "behold me, a ravening wolf, and full of iniquity, who most humbly beseech you that, as you did bring forth the Lamb without spot, whose blood hath redeemed and purified us, so He may in such wise purify and change my wolfish nature, that I may become a tame and docile sheep, to serve and follow you all the days of my life in your most holy

order." He continued praying thus for several hours ; then, rising from his knees, he went to the prior of the monastery, and begged to be received into the order. After his conversion had been sufficiently tested, he was admitted with the full consent and blessing of his now happy parents.

Andrew was subsequently elected Bishop of Fiesole ; when he heard of it, he fled and hid himself. After a long and useless search, the canons of the church were proceeding to a new election, when a child of three years old was heard to exclaim, from the midst of the assembly, "It is Andrew, whom God has chosen ; go to Chartreux, and there you will find him engaged in prayer." They found him as described : he was immediately consecrated ; and governed his diocese twenty-three years, to the entire satisfaction of his clergy, to whom he was both a father and a model.

95.

MISFORTUNES GOD'S FAVOURS.

Most remarkable was the answer which St. Theresa made to a devout merchant from whom she had received an alms. "I have recommended you in my prayers, as you desired," she said to him, "and it has been revealed to me that your name is written in the Book of Life ; and as a sign of the truth of what I say, you will never prosper again in your worldly affairs." And so, in fact, it turned out. His ships were wrecked and sunk one after another ; becoming unable in consequence to pay his debts, he was thrown into prison, and released only on account of the esteem which his creditors entertained for his virtues and piety. Being thus stripped of all worldly goods, he lived contented with the grace of God alone, and closed his days in the odour of sanctity.

When the mother of Fouquet, minister of finance

under Louis XIV., heard of the arrest of her son, she threw herself on her knees, and raising her hands to heaven, "I thank Thee, O my God," she cried; "I have always prayed to Thee for my child's salvation; and lo, here is the way opened."

A king of Japan was converted by the preaching of St. Francis Xavier. He had hitherto enjoyed the utmost prosperity; but no sooner did he renounce idolatry, and embrace the Christian faith, than it pleased God to visit him with all kinds of calamities. Two months after his baptism, his subjects rose against him and drove him from his throne; reproaching him with having changed his religion, and declaring that this was the cause of all his misfortunes. But the prince, full of faith, saw in all that had happened to him only the signs of the Divine favour; and protested on his knees at the foot of the altar, that if all Japan and all Europe—nay, if the Fathers of the Society and the Pope himself were to renounce Jesus Christ—he would still confess and adore Him to the last hour of his life, and would be ever ready to shed his blood in testimony to the truth of His religion.

ST. BERNARD AND HIS BROTHERS.

When St. Bernard had determined on leaving the world and entering the monastery of Citeaux, he resolved also to carry his brothers and relatives with him into religion. And first came his uncle Galdric, a puissant noble and a valiant knight, well known for warlike feats; he quitted his good castle of Touillon, his vassals, and his riches, and gave in to the burning words of his nephew. Then the heavenly fire kindled his young brother Bartholomew; his heart yielded easily, for he had not yet been made a knight, and had still his spurs to win. Next came Andrew, the fourth

brother; it was a sore trial to him to abandon the world, for he had just received his knightly sword from the altar at the hands of a bishop, and had seen his first field of arms; but at last he yielded, for he saw in a vision his sainted mother smiling upon him; and he cried out to Bernard, "I see my mother!" and at once gave in. But the trial was still sorer when it came to the turn of Guy, the eldest of the brothers; he was a married man, and his young wife loved him tenderly; besides which he had more than one daughter, with whom it was hard indeed to part in the age of their childhood; and even after he had yielded to his brother's persuasions, and had broken through all these ties, a greater difficulty than all remained behind. It was a law of the Church, that neither of a married pair could enter a cloister without the other's consent; and how was it possible that a delicate high-born woman would be willing to part with her husband, and immure herself within the walls of a convent? Bernard, however, declared to Guy, that if she did not consent, God would smite her with a deadly disease; and so it turned out. She soon fell ill; and finding that it was hard for her to kick against the pricks, she sent for Bernard and gave her consent. None, however, clung to the world with such deep-rooted affection as Gerard, the second brother. He was a frank and high-spirited soldier, yet withal sage in counsel; and he had won all about him by his kind-heartedness. The world was all open before him; his talents were sure to raise him to high rank and honour; and he was ardently devoted to feats of chivalrous daring. To him the conduct of his brothers seemed to be mere folly; and he impatiently repelled Bernard's counsel. But the fire of charity was more powerful than the young knight's ardour. "I know, I know," said Bernard, "that pain alone will give wisdom to thine ears;" and laying his hands on Gerard's side, he continued—"A day will come, and that soon, when a lance, piercing this side, will tear a way to thy heart for this counsel of thy salvation, which

thou now despisest; and thou shalt be in fear, but shalt not die." Gerard was with the army of the Duke of Burgundy besieging the castle of Grancey; and a few days after he had, in the heat of the battle, charged into the midst of the enemy, when he was unhorsed, wounded by a lance in the very place where Bernard had laid his finger, and dragged to the ground. His brother's words rose before him, and he cried, "I am a monk, a monk of Citeaux!" He was taken captive, and lodged in a dungeon, from which he soon after made his escape in a way which seemed perfectly miraculous, and joined his brother Bernard.

When the time for proceeding to Citeaux was come, Bernard and his four brothers went to the castle of Fountains to take leave of their father and sister. The little Nivard was playing with other boys as they passed. Guy, the eldest brother, stopped his childish glee for a moment, and said to him, "God be with thee, Nivard; we go to religion, and leave all our lands and goods to thee." "What!" replied the boy; "earth for me, heaven for you!—the bargain is not fair." Perhaps he knew not then what he said; but shortly afterwards he followed his brothers and entered the monastery.

ST. FRANCIS AND HIS TREASURE.

St. Francis of Assisi was one day on a journey in company with one of his religious. They seated themselves by the wayside, close to a spring, to take their meal; and Francis, putting some pieces of bread, which had been given to him in alms, and which were very hard and mouldy, on a stone near, began expressing his joy and satisfaction, and pressed his companion to give thanks to God for such a treasure. He repeated this several times, elevating his voice more and more in the exultation of his heart. "But," said the reli-

gious, "what is this great treasure you are talking about? It seems to me we are in want of a great many things." "The great treasure is," replied Francis, "that, being in want of so much, God, in His good providence, has so bountifully furnished us with this bread and this spring, and provided us with this stone to serve as a table."

98.

THE GREAT HOSPITAL AT GRANADA.

St. John of God, born of poor and humble parents in the city of Granada in the year 1495, became the founder of the Brethren of Charity, who were soon spread all over Europe. This holy man was at first a soldier and a traveller, though, when but a youth, he gave himself up as a servant to the hospital at Medino Campi, in order that he might exercise his charity in serving the sick poor. Subsequently he appears to have lost the grace of piety, and commenced a reckless course of adventures and wanderings; but being reconverted to a religious life by the sermons of St. Ávila, he finally devoted himself to the assistance and comfort of the poor in hospitals. He entered Granada as a poor man, only earning enough each day for his subsistence by selling wood, which he used to pick up in the forests. He was without credit; and yet he formed the resolution of founding a hospital. Walking through the city, he saw written upon a wall, "House to let, to lodge the poor." Immediately he applied to the proprietor, who, without examining whether he had sufficient means, agreed to let him have it for a certain sum. Thus, a poor man, without a shilling, hired a house to receive the poor; and that was the origin of the Great Hospital at Granada.

The first thing he did was to call in the poor and the infirm; then he went out to beg alms for them; and from the first day he received enough to supply

the most urgent wants of the institution. A chaplain of the king sent him three hundred and twelve reals, which he employed in purchasing beds; many devout persons gave him furniture and money. In this hospital the sick poor were attended with the utmost care and tenderness. St. John made it an essential part of his plan to instruct and convert the souls of those whom he received; and he rejected no one, however vile.

The Hospital of Granada, shortly after its establishment, was the scene and instrument of a miraculous grace. Antony Martin had thrown Don Pedro Velasco into prison, on the charge of having killed his brother, and had come to Madrid to hasten on the prosecution. Antony, though a haughty knight, and abandoned to a life of worldly pleasure, had become known to St. John of God, owing to his being in the practice of visiting the hospital; and the holy man had recourse to prayer, in hopes of reconciling the two enemies. Meeting Antony in a street, he drew from his sleeve the crucifix he always carried there, and, holding it up before his eyes, he said, "If your enemy killed your brother, our Lord Jesus Christ died for you and for me; and if the blood of your brother cries for vengeance, much more ought the blood of your Saviour to move you to forgiveness." These words, pronounced in most pathetic tones, pierced the heart of the proud man. Falling on his knees before the minister of God, he promised, with tears, that from that moment, instead of the implacable foe and haughty grandee, he would become the friend of his enemy and the servant of the poor. They then walked together to the prison, where Velasco was every day in expectation of death. Great was his alarm on seeing his enemy enter; but Antony gave him speedy encouragement. The two knights embraced, and gave each other the kiss of peace; they mutually vowed an everlasting friendship; but henceforth their hearts were fixed on heaven; and they both declared their resolution to serve the poor in the hospital of St. John of God during the remainder of their lives. Admirable

spectacle it was, to behold the saint walking through the streets of Granada, having on either hand these two friends, but lately irreconcilable foes, and now so closely knit together in the bonds of grace. They were on their way from the prison to the hospital, which they never afterwards left. A long retreat, and a course of instruction, developed and completed the conversion of these two noblemen, who became eminent servants of Jesus Christ.

99.

CHARITY OF ST. JANE FRANCES DE CHANTAL.

It may be said of the blessed Mother de Chantal, that she had imbibed that spirit of charity, patience, and zeal, with which she was filled, at the same fountain whereat her holy director St. Francis de Sales had drunk so deeply. She was charitable towards all and at all times, but especially towards the poor and sick. She was not one of those who look upon the poor as troublesome, and who relieve them in order to get rid of them; she loved them, and treated them with the tenderest consideration, and had more pleasure in giving than they could have in receiving. During a season of famine, she not only fed the poor who lived upon her own property, but those also of her neighbourhood, who flocked around her as their common mother. But she did even more than this: she ordered that all the sick and destitute should be brought to her. Amongst others, a wretched man was found covered with ulcers; a most pitiable object, stretched at full length by the side of a hedge. She received this poor leper as a boon from heaven; she dressed his wounds; she washed his sores; during four whole months she waited upon him personally, and often served him on her knees. She kept him till he was at the point of death, when he said, "Madam, if the Lord hears the prayers of the poor, then indeed your joy will be great hereafter."

“Go, my child,” said she, embracing him, and bathing him with her tears; “in your life you have suffered as Lazarus; and now, like him, you will be carried by angels into heaven” At that moment he expired. She would insist upon laying him out with her own hands; and when her friends remonstrated with her, fearing she might contract the disease, her reply was, “No, I fear no leprosy but that of sin.” What a rebuke is this to those who shrink from coming in contact with their fellow-creatures because they are poor or sick! Madame de Chantal was but twenty-two years of age when she thus devoted herself to the practice of works of charity.

100.

THE DISCIPLINE OF THE CLOISTER.

In the year 18—, an English presbyterian gentleman visited the monastery of La Trappe. The abbot pointed out to him several of the brothers who had taken vows of perpetual silence. Approaching one of those who had been recently received into the community, to which he had made a vow to attach himself as soon as he was free from military service, the abbot addressed his visitor, saying, “You see here an unhappy soldier, who, fearing the cannon of the enemy, has deserted his colours, returned to France, and concealed himself and his shame in the seclusion of these cloisters.” At these words the monk changed colour; his eyes sparkled with unusual brilliancy; anger and offended pride were expressed in their haughty glare: it was plain that he was agitated by a terrible struggle; his whole countenance was changed; and his hands were involuntarily raised in deprecatory denial. Suddenly his eyes were directed towards a crucifix; he clasped his hands, fell humbly on his knees before the abbot, and then returned, pale and silent, into the hall. The Englishman, touched by this sight, asked the abbot

how he could so harshly reproach a repentant soldier expiating by his present austere life his former misconduct. The abbot thus replied: "I have done this in order to show you the control which true religion can exert over men who have faith. This brother, so far from being a coward and a deserter, was one of the bravest of the soldiers of France. You have seen the conflict excited in him by my accusation, and you have witnessed also his resignation and his humility." "It is sublime!" responded the Englishman; and shortly after he himself became a convert to the Catholic faith.

101.

THE PLAGUE AT MARSEILLES.

Marseilles had scarce recovered from the excitement consequent on the passage through the city of Mademoiselle de Valois, the daughter of the regent, on her way to espouse the Duke of Modena; the flowers which had been scattered in her path had scarcely faded, the galleys which had borne her and her retinue in gay procession on the waters were still floating in the harbour, their streamers still flying in the breeze, when, in the month of June 1720, the dreadful rumour ran from mouth to mouth that the plague was at Marseilles. The terror was indescribable, and pervaded all classes. In vain the government attempted to allay the public fears; the funerals every day increasing belied all their confident assurances; all who had the means fled from the city: soon the streets were like a desert; the lazarettoes were left without keepers, the hospitals without attendants; the courts of justice were closed. One general spirit of selfishness took possession of all hearts; the most intimate ties were broken; people cared only for their own safety, without a thought of their friends or neighbours. The sick were turned pitilessly out of doors; children drove their parents and parents their

children into the streets. All natural affection was destroyed. By the middle of July there remained within the city only the poor, who had nowhere else to go, the sick, whom their maladies prevented from escaping, and of all the public functionaries, only four magistrates of the town, and the heroic archbishop, Mgr. de Belzunce, who had in vain been urged to abandon the devoted spot; to these must be added a courageous citizen, the Chevalier Rose, who, though held by no ties of duty, preferred sharing the dangers of the plague to deserting the miserable people in their extremity. Left thus wholly to themselves, they were not disheartened; each took his own department, and stood resolutely at the post he had voluntarily accepted. The two magistrates looked to the provisioning of the city, engaged physicians, opened hospitals for the sick, and adopted all the necessary sanitary measures; the Chevalier Rose attended to the burial of the dead, superintended the labours of the workmen, whom he collected in regular bands, maintained public order, and by all the means which money could command, endeavoured to stay the progress of the frightful malady. As for the archbishop, he had a hand and an eye for every work; and to an indefatigable zeal added all the loving devotion of a true and faithful pastor.

Deprived of his domestics, and even of his ecclesiastical staff, who had fallen victims to the disease, Mgr. de Belzunce, alone and unattended, traversed from early dawn the streets and alleys of this city of the dead; he entered the plague-infected houses of the very lowest of the populace, comforting and encouraging the wretched inmates, careless of contagion, and apparently unconscious of the risk he was incurring. After a day passed in this work of mercy, the evening would find him again in the streets among the people, in the squares encumbered with the ghastly forms of the sick and dying, exhorting all to patience and tender confidence in God, and administering the last aids and consolations of religion. At certain hours he said prayers

in the public thoroughfares, and on occasions would bring forth the Most Holy Sacrament, and with It give benediction to the suffering crowds. Did their wearied and fainting hearts need the encouragement of an intrepid example, the archbishop was ever ready to supply it. As the numbers of the dead augmented every day, there was a lack of bearers to carry them to the grave; the corpses were thrown in heaps upon tumbrils; but not a man would convey the tainted load to the common pit. The galley-slaves, who had been set at liberty to aid in burying the dead, mutinied, and broke the traces of the carts; and the workmen, panic-stricken, refused to repair them. To restore order and confidence, Mgr. de Belzunce himself mounted on the first vehicle that stood ready, and drove it to its destination.

Meanwhile the Chevalier Rose was engaged in a no less loathsome office. On one of the ramparts of the town there lay a vast heap of festering corpses, from which a deadly exhalation rose, as from a very volcano of pestilence; for nearly three weeks some 2000 bodies had formed on that spot a horrible mass of sweltering putridity. No one ventured to go near such a focus of mortality; the boldest recoiled from the task of its removal. The chevalier undertook its accomplishment: close to the esplanade he discovered some ancient fortifications sunk to the level of the sea; he caused the vaults to be opened, assembled with the aid of a liberal largess a hundred galley-slaves, saturated their clothes with vinegar, put himself at their head, and, by a rapid manœuvre executed under his directions, in less than twenty minutes the whole of the frightful mass was precipitated into the open bastions, which were as rapidly filled up with earth and stones.

Great numbers of clergy, both religious and secular, vied with each other in devoting themselves to the service of the miserable inhabitants; many came from the country for the purpose; they gave all they possessed, and then borrowed of others, for the relief of the suffering poor; they were indefatigable in tending the sick

and administering the sacraments; some among them, who had been attacked by the disease, when but half recovered left their beds, dragged themselves into the streets, and, supporting themselves as best they could, assisted the archbishop in confessing the dying and relieving the bodily as well as spiritual necessities of the wretched objects with which the streets were strewed. Some religious, finding the avenues to the town all closed, swam the most rapid rivers to get access to the afflicted people. A whole convent of Recollects offered themselves to the work of charity; of these, twenty-six fell martyrs to their love of God and of the brethren; while out of a like number of Jesuit fathers eighteen made willing sacrifice of their lives; and of a hundred and five Capuchin friars the pestilence took forty-three.

Such noble examples did not fail of their effect. A considerable number of the townspeople, whose alarm abated when they saw the scourge thus resolutely met by these brave men, returned to the place, and united their efforts with those of the clergy and their fellow-citizens. In the very height, too, of the malady, there might be seen a lady, young and beautiful, going about the streets of Marseilles relieving the sick, refusing no office, however revolting, and ready with her assistance every where. When the pestilence ceased she was seen no more, and her name was never known.

All the churches had been closed; but on the festival of All Saints an altar was prepared in the principal square of the city; and early in the morning the archbishop issued from the palace, his head and feet bare, a cord round his neck, and a burning torch in his hand, and proceeded in this penitential guise to the spot, where, after addressing a most touching appeal to the people, he solemnly consecrated the diocese to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and offered the Adorable Sacrifice to implore the mercy of God on the desolated city; while the square itself and the neighbouring streets from which the altar could be seen, were covered with kneeling multitudes, who with tears and groans bewailed their sins, and cried

aloud for pardon. On the 15th of November, after publicly reciting a form of prayers which had been sent from Rome, he gave Benediction from the tower of one of the highest churches, while, as the bells rang out, and the cannons thundered from the forts, the people throughout the city prostrated themselves in prayer. Towards the end of December, the plague, after carrying off a third of the population, appeared to abate, the inhabitants began to come out of their houses the phantoms of their former selves, and the streets, still encumbered with corpses, were again frequented; the shops were reopened, provisions were brought in by the country people, and a complete purification of the city was commenced, when alarming symptoms again manifested themselves, and the old apprehensions were revived. This uncertain state of things prevailed for several months; but towards the end of Lent, in the year 1721, the people took courage; and on Easter Sunday, in the fervour of their zeal, made forcible entrance into the churches, from which the sanitary regulations had hitherto excluded them. To avert the danger of contagion consequent on so many people being congregated together, the archbishop had an altar erected in the principal street, where he said Mass on two successive days. On the Sundays that followed, he offered the Holy Sacrifice in other quarters of the city; nor did he relinquish his measures of precaution, nor his extraordinary labours of charity, so long as a vestige of the appalling malady remained.

It was not until the month of June that the plague entirely disappeared. Then, when all danger was over, the ordinary business of life was resumed; every thing went on as before; and the people forgot, in fêtes and pastimes, the frightful calamity with which their city had been visited. And they forgot their benefactors, their devotion, and their sacrifices; nor was it till 1802 that Marseilles called to mind its heroic citizens, and erected a monument to the memory of the holy archbishop and his courageous helpers.

102.

FENELON.

Fenelon, Archbishop of Cambray, was accused by several of the prelates of France, and in particular by one of the greatest men of the age, the celebrated Bossuet, Bishop of Meaux, of having published propositions dangerous to religion, in an ascetical work entitled *An Explanation of the Maxims of the Saints*. After having in vain defended himself from the charge, he transmitted the matter for the decision of the Holy See. A commission of cardinals was appointed, and, after most careful examination, the book was formally condemned by the Pope. Fenelon received a copy of the decree at the very moment he was ascending the pulpit to preach to the people. He immediately changed the subject of his discourse, and spoke at great length on the submission due to authority, and in such an earnest strain that his audience were moved to tears. But this was not all. In his capacity of archbishop it was his duty to announce to the church of which he had the charge the condemnation of his own book, and to prohibit all persons from reading it. He did so in the simplest terms, without reservation or restriction of any kind. "Our holy Father the Pope," he said, "has condemned by a brief the work entitled *An Explanation of the Maxims of the Saints*, with twenty-three propositions extracted therefrom. We submit to this brief as regards both the text of the book itself and the said twenty-three propositions, simply, absolutely, and without a shadow of reservation; and with all our heart we exhort you to a like submission, without any the slightest detriment to the simplicity of that obedience which is due to the Holy See, of which we would, by the grace of God, set you an example to our latest breath. God forbid," he added, "that I should be remembered hereafter except as a pastor who held himself as much bound to obedience as the meanest sheep in his flock, and one who desired to set no bounds to his submission."

THE SCOFFER IN THE CONFESSIONAL.

A party of young men were assembled one evening in a frequented hotel in one of the chief provincial towns of France. The bottle had circulated freely, and they were engaged in the eager discussion of politics and the news of the day, when suddenly, as often happens, the conversation turned upon religion. These young gentlemen were Catholics in name, and had been brought up in the religion of their fathers; but they had been carried away by the free-thinking opinions of the day, and had succeeded—so at least they imagined—with the help of the irreligious books they had read, in eradicating from their hearts the belief of their early youth. Religion, therefore, served only as a butt for their wit and ridicule, each speaker striving to outdo the rest in ribaldry and blasphemy. The confessional especially was the subject about which they made merry.

“It would be fine fun,” remarked one, “if we were to make believe to go for once to confession.” His companions declared that it would be a wonderfully good joke, but defied him to carry it through. “I pledge myself to do it,” he replied. “What would be easier? I’ll bet you so much, and so many bottles for another merry meeting, when I will relate to you all my adventures in the confessional.” And so it was agreed.

The next day—it was Saturday—some of the party early sought out their bold associate to remind him of his promise. He laughingly renewed it; and in high spirits gloried beforehand in the victory he should achieve over those bigoted priests. In the evening he actually repaired to a church, and betook himself to one of the confessionals, where he waited with much impatience till his turn came. He then knelt down, and addressed the priest in these words: “Sir, I beg you to understand that I have not come here to confess in good earnest, but only to win a bet. I confess, then, that

I have committed such and such sins, but I don't trouble my head the least about the matter; moreover such and such sins, but I don't care about it." And in this style he continued to mention other sins, always adding scornfully that he did not care the least about the matter. When he had finished, the confessor with great calmness and composure said, "You have done your part to win your bet, you have confessed your sins; it is for me now to do mine, and to impose on you an appropriate penance. For three successive days, then, you will repeat three times—morning, noon, and night—these words :

'I shall die ; but I don't care about it.

There is a judgment to come ; but I don't care about it.

There is a hell for sinners ; but I don't care about it.'

So saying, he dismissed him.

With a feeling of considerable self-satisfaction the young man acquainted his comrades that very evening with the successful accomplishment of his feat, and demanded the payment of his bet. His friends, however, who had regarded the whole thing as a piece of empty bravado, were a little taken by surprise, and insisted that he must first perform the penance that had been set him, since this was an integral part of confession. "If that is all," he replied, somewhat unwillingly, "so let it be; I give you my word of honour that I will go through with the whole business. The bet is fairly won."

And, in fact, he began to repeat the prescribed words, hastily and thoughtlessly at first, but by degrees with an unwonted emotion. They seemed to evoke from the grave the extinct belief of his childhood; they made him restless and dejected; at last his lips ceased to pronounce the awful syllables; he reflected seriously upon death, eternity, and the state of his soul. In a few days grace had accomplished its work: he returned to the same confessor, disclosed to him the state of his soul, and begged his assistance to make a sincere and thorough confession in order to obtain the forgiveness of God.

During the remainder of his life he strove by great diligence in the practice of his religion to make amends for his previous transgressions; and frequently related the foregoing story with deep thankfulness for the wonderful leadings of God, who, to rescue him from eternal death, had even made use of an insult committed against one of His holy sacraments.

104.

THE MAYOR AND THE BAKERS.

The bakers of Lyons came to M. Dugas the mayor, and requested permission to raise the price of bread. He replied that he would inquire into the justice of their application; and the bakers took their departure, but not before they had contrived to leave upon the table a purse containing two hundred louis d'or. Shortly after, they returned, nothing doubting but that the purse of gold had effectually pleaded their cause with the man of office. "Gentlemen," said M. Dugas, "I have been considering the reasons you advanced, and I do not find them valid. To raise the price of bread would be an injustice to the public. However, I have divided your money between the two hospitals of the town, as doubtless was your charitable intention; and it has struck me that since you were in a condition to bestow so large an alms upon the poor, you cannot be such losers by your business as you have given me to understand."

105.

THE ARTIST OF DANTZIG.

In St. Mary's church, at Dantzic, is to be seen a beautiful image of Our Lady, the history of which is as follows. A poor artist was unjustly accused of a capital

offence, and condemned to death. He implored his judges to grant him a reprieve of a few days, that he might fulfil a vow which he had made. His request was conceded; and, on being reconducted to his prison, he threw himself on his knees, and prayed fervently to Mary, consoler of the afflicted; he then set himself to model in clay the image of her whom in his anguish he had so earnestly invoked. His faith and his piety served him for inspiration; so noble and majestic was the figure that grew under his hands, such grace did he throw around the figure of his august patroness, and so divine was the sweetness expressed in her countenance, that the magistrates of the city were struck with wonder and delight. "Is it possible," they said one to the other, "that so sublime and spiritual an idea of the holy Mother of God could proceed from the mind of a man guilty of such a crime? The execution of the sentence must be suspended, and the process revised." The evidence was reweighed; fresh inquiries were made; and the result was a triumphant acquittal. The artist was conducted with acclamations from his prison; and, as an act of thanksgiving, deposited in the great church of St. Mary's the image to which he owed the preservation of his life.

106.

MEEKNESS OF ST. FRANCIS DE SALES.

St. Francis de Sales was naturally of a quick and hasty temper; but as soon as he was made sensible of his fault he applied himself diligently to its correction, and became a model of mildness and sweetness, as the following examples may show.

A young man, who had conceived a great dislike for the holy prelate, came one day under his window, and, with the aid of several dogs and some of the ragamuffins of the place, made a most horrible disturbance; and not content with this, he burst into the bishop's

room, and assailed him with the vilest epithets his fury could suggest. St. Francis preserved the most placid demeanour, and to all his insults answered not a word. The young man, interpreting this silence as contempt, grew only the more enraged, and proceeded to even greater violence, but without succeeding in disturbing the prelate's equanimity. The madman was at length obliged to withdraw; and the friends of the saint expressed their astonishment at his being able to endure so much violence and insolence, and to maintain his usual tranquillity. St. Francis replied, "We have made a compact together, my tongue and I, and have agreed that while my feelings were excited my lips should not utter a word. And could I have taught this poor creature a better way of keeping his temper than by myself holding my tongue? or have more effectually allayed his irritation than by silence? Ought we not to have pity on an unhappy man carried away by his passion?"

On another occasion, when he was preaching at Annecy, two lawyers caused a paper to be handed to him in the midst of his sermon, couched in language of the most insulting description. The saint took the paper, and read it, thinking it was intended to suggest topics of instruction for the people. After perusing it in silence he proceeded with his discourse, without evincing any sign of disturbance. But when he had come down from the pulpit, and had taken a little repose, he inquired of the clerk who the persons were who had sent him the paper; and after learning their names and address, repaired forthwith to their residence, where, without making any allusion to the insult that had been offered him, he begged them to tell him in what way he had offended them. This they proceeded to do. St. Francis listened patiently to all they had to say against him, and when they had concluded, assured them that it had been very far from his intention to cause them any annoyance, and, casting himself on his knees before them, humbly asked their pardon. At the sight of so much meekness the gentlemen were as much con-

founded as they had previously been exasperated; they, in their turn, begged pardon for the affront they had put upon him, and ever after treated him with the utmost respect and deference, never failing, on all occasions, to testify their admiration for a virtue so heroic and so truly Christian.

107.

CHARLES V. AT CONFESSION.

Charles V. was making his Easter confession. After detailing his sins with sincere contrition and a lively purpose of amendment, he humbly asked for absolution, when the confessor inquired whether he had mentioned all his sins without reserve; to which the emperor replied emphatically, "Yes." "No," rejoined the priest, "you have not mentioned them all. So far you have confessed only the sins of Charles, you must now confess those of the emperor;" thereby reminding him that the neglect of the duties of our station is itself a sin which man must repent of and amend, or God will hereafter call him to account.

108.

SECRET CHARITY.

On the 3d of February 1808 there died at Paris a professor of history at the Imperial Institute, whose name was Germain Poirier: he was also one of the librarians of the arsenal. These two offices combined brought him in a considerable income; yet his whole exterior was so mean and shabby that strangers might have taken him for a poor man. A single coat of coarse cloth served him for all seasons, and he wore it till it was no longer fit for use. His abstemiousness was no

less remarkable: the plainest vegetables, without even salt to season them, bread, and water—this was his daily diet. In the eyes of most people he passed for a beggarly miser; for he did not seem to have any expensive tastes. But the instant he was dead, the veil which had enshrouded his life dropped; the blessings of the sorrowing poor, who crowded to his humble funeral, revealed what had hitherto remained a mystery: the *miser* had shared with them all that he possessed in the world. On opening his desk, instead of a hoard of gold and bank-notes, all that was found was a few loose coins and a bundle of memoranda containing the names of those who were the regular dependants on his bounty: this was his treasure. He had worn shabby clothes to prevent his poor clients going naked; his life had been one of privation that they might have bread to eat; to relieve their poverty he had made himself poor. His personal expenses had never exceeded twenty pounds a year; the rest of his income he had bestowed on his friends and the poor.

Germain Poirier was born at Paris in the year 1724, and before the suppression of the religious orders had been a member of the Benedictine community of St. Maur.

POPE ST. LEO AND ATTLA.

In the spring of the year 452 there came rushing through the gorges of the Julian Alps a torrent of invaders the most hideous and merciless that ever hapless Italy had yet beheld. These were the nation of the Huns. The very sight of them struck terror into the Goths themselves, whose historian, Jornandez, thus describes them: "The livid colour of their skin had in it something most revolting; theirs was not so much a face as a deformed mass of flesh, provided, instead of eyes, with two dark and forbidding spots." "They

looked not like men," says Ammianus, "but like wild beasts standing on their hind legs, as if in mockery of the human species." Their manners and disposition were as detestable as their physiognomy. Neither temple nor shrine was to be seen among them; but a naked sword, fixed in the ground, represented to them the genius of murder and havoc—their only deity. Their mode of worship was suitable to their god; they cut off the shoulder and arm of each hundredth captive, and casting them into the air, drew omens and presages from the manner in which they fell on a pile of blazing faggots. Their delight was in massacre; and their course over the fair fields of Europe was marked with desolation and ruin.

Their leader, Attila, who had acquired for himself the title of "the Scourge of God," was followed by no less than 500,000 of these demons in human form; and it was his boast, that wherever his horse once trod, the grass never grew again. The human race seemed to vanish before him; and every monument and vestige of civilised existence disappeared as his legions swept over the land. In his march from the great wall of China to the Rhine, he had left nothing behind him but a solitude strewed with the skeletons of nations and cities. With an enormous head, broad high shoulders, a body squarely built, the person of Attila displayed the power of a giant with a dwarf's deformity. His nose, like that of all his race, was flat, so that two small nostrils seemed the whole of it; his eyes, deep-seated and small, darted looks of ferocity around; they were set far apart and slanted inwards, as did the eyebrows, and were partly covered by the eyelid. He had a custom also of rolling the balls of them continually, as though to enjoy the terror he inspired. His head was large, his complexion swarthy; he had little hair on his skull, and no beard. He defeated the Roman armies in three pitched battles, and utterly destroyed seventy cities. He then turned round to the west, and rode off, with his savage horsemen, to the Rhine. He en-

tered France, and stormed and sacked the greater portion of its cities. At Metz he involved in one promiscuous slaughter priests and children; he burned the city, so that a solitary chapel of St. Stephen was its sole remains. At length he was defeated by the Romans and Goths united, at Châlons-sur-Marne, in a tremendous battle, which ended in 252,000, or, as one account says, 300,000 men being left dead on the field.

Irritated rather than humbled by this disaster, he turned, like some ferocious beast of prey, on Italy. Crossing the Alps, he laid siege to the noble city of Aquileia, which he took and sacked, and so utterly destroyed that the succeeding generation could scarcely trace its ruins. He turned back, and passed through Lombardy; and, as he moved along, he set fire to Padua and other cities, plundered Vincenza, Verona, and Bergamo, and sold to the citizens of Milan and Pavia their lives and their buildings at the price of the surrender of their property. Rome itself was left a defenceless prey to his devastating hordes; not a single cohort or maniple of troops stood between him and the grand object of his ambition—when suddenly, in the midst of his onward march, he retreated back into the wilderness, amidst the execrations of his baffled followers,—all at the instance of a feeble and unarmed old man.

The Emperor Valentinian, terror-stricken and powerless, was preparing to abandon his capital to the resistless invader, when Pope Leo, accompanied only by Avienus, a consular personage, and Trigetius, prefect of the prætorium, set out for the barbarian camp. The place of this celebrated interview is now the great Austrian fortress of Peschiera, where the Mincio enters the Lago de Garda, close to the farm of Virgil. "Great king," said Leo, as he approached the Hunnish chief, "the emperor and people of Rome, once, like yourself, conquerors of the world, have sent me to implore your clemency. Nor do I take shame to myself at being the bearer of such a message, for I plead for the life of

my flock. I am the minister of that God who exalteth the humble, succoureth the weak, and putteth down the mighty from their seat. Abuse not your own strength and the fears of this unhappy people. Be content to see the head of the Apostolic Church, and the envoy of the Roman city, thus humbled before you." Attila had beheld many great men in his day; he had looked upon the majesty of the Cæsars, and the eagles of their legions; he had never before seen a Vicar of Christ. While Leo was speaking a divine radiance seemed to light up the features of the holy pontiff; the Hun regarded with astonishment, and with a trouble unaccountable, the serene majesty of his countenance and the sweet eloquence of his words; and as he ceased to speak, suddenly (as the tradition avers) he beheld behind the pontiff two celestial personages (St. Peter and St. Paul) brandishing flaming swords in their hands, and, with threatening gesture, pointing to the north from which he had come. But be this as it may, it is certain matter of history that, subdued by the aspect and the appeal of Leo, and by the power of that religion which was represented in his person, Attila made terms of peace, and straightway evacuated Italy.

THE PRIEST AND THE COMMERCIAL TRAVELLER.

A few years ago, before railroads had superseded the cumbrous *diligence*, a priest came to the booking-office at Nancy, at which the vehicle was every moment expected to arrive, and took the only remaining place which was in the *coupé*. He had scarcely paid his fare when a commercial traveller, with a consequential air, applied for a seat in the interior, and learnt, to his intense dissatisfaction, which he was at no pains to conceal, that all that remained was the *impériale*, or the top of the *diligence*. At the same instant the crack of

the whip is heard, and the heavy machine rolls up to the door.

"Take your places, gentlemen. M. l'abbé, here—*coupé*, No. 3; you, monsieur, on the *impériale*."

"Curse my ill-luck!" grumbled the man. "I must shiver up yonder, while this coxcomb of a priest is snug in his *coupé*. Those rascals of Jesuits shove their noses in every where; but for him, I should have had a pleasant journey, and fared as I ought."

"True, my friend," said the priest mildly, "you deserve the *coupé* more than I do. My journey is but a short one; while you, I dare say, have a long way to go; let us change places." And the good man was preparing to alight; but his fellow-travellers, touched by his kindness and humility, and provoked at the other's arrogance and conceit, loudly protested against the arrangement, and held the priest back by his cassock.

The object of their indignation, meanwhile, had changed colour violently; his lips trembled; and in a voice which indicated the strong emotion with which he was labouring, he said, "M. le curé, you are a gentleman, and I am a brute. You shall remain in your place, and I will scramble up to the *impériale*, which is good enough for a lout like me."

"At any rate," said the venerable ecclesiastic, with a sweetness of manner quite irresistible, "take this cloak, my friend; it is cold, and it will be some protection to you."

The offer was accepted, and the *diligence* proceeded on its way, leaving the bystanders struck with admiration at so much forbearance and charity.

The hero of this little incident (says the *Espérance* of Nancy) was the much-regretted M. Berman, that holy priest, whose death, within the last few days, has been mourned by the whole population of this city.

The above story reminds us of another, which has something more of the comic in it. Monseigneur d'Affre,

Archbishop of Paris, was one day in a public conveyance, when he was accosted by a bagman, who, wishing to raise a laugh at a priest and a bishop, asked him whether he had ever heard, or, if not, could solve, the following conundrum: "What is the difference between a bishop and a jackass?" On the prelate goodhumouredly replying in the negative, the bagman gave him the answer, at the same time looking round at his fellow-travellers for applause: "The difference is, that a jackass has a cross on his back, and a bishop on his breast," alluding to the pectoral cross which it is customary for bishops to wear.

It was now the bishop's turn; and, turning to his neighbour, he asked him if he could tell him what was the difference between a bagman and a jackass. On the man's answering he did not know; "Neither," said the prelate, looking archly at him, "do I." A general laugh followed at this unexpected turning of the tables; and the bishop's intended tormentor, completely crest-fallen, took an early opportunity to leave the vehicle.

111.

THE PROGRESSISTAS IN SPAIN.

The dissolution of the monasteries in Spain may be said to date from the massacre of the Jesuits and Franciscans, in July 1834, at Madrid. The scene is described by an eye-witness. The fathers and scholars were taking their evening repast in the seminary, when the murderers burst open the doors. The community repaired to the chapel, and awaited death on their knees; the scholars were spared, but the fathers and brothers were cruelly butchered. F. Dominic Barrau, of Cortes, was cut in pieces before the eyes of the children; Brother Resedas fell under innumerable stabs; F. Sauri, professor of history, was put to death more deliberately,—his teeth were broken with hammers, his

whole body gashed with wounds, and his skull finally cloven. The whole building resounded with the clashing of swords, the report of muskets, the groans of the dying, the shouts and horrible imprecations of the assassins, and the sorrowful cries and moans of the students, deploring the fate of their masters; some of the youths were wounded while in the act of embracing them. F. Calodenio Unanué, while praying for forgiveness for his enemies, was pierced with a bayonet, the point of which came out at his breast.

From the seminary the persecutors passed to the college, where they killed F. John Ortegas, one of the most learned men in Spain, and professor of Arabic. Near him was found dead the laborious and edifying Brother Ortolara. F. José Maria Elola suffered a more painful death; for, after having his tonsure beaten in with repeated blows, he remained in his agony till two in the morning, when he was found on his knees, with his forehead on the ground, a few minutes before he expired. F. Petro Demont was murdered in the porters' hall. F. José Garnier, professor of humanities, who was said never to have lost his baptismal grace, was recognised as he was endeavouring to make his escape in the street; he was struck on the head with a sword, and then on his hands, as he raised them to ward off the strokes. F. Barba was killed at the street-door, as he knelt before the assassins, and was so covered with wounds that it was difficult to recognise his body. F. Martin Beugens was murdered while attempting to fly. F. José Sancho, nephew to the celebrated F. Sebastian Sancho, who died in prison, where he was unjustly detained, was bound along with one of the servants of the college, and dragged into the street, where he received six deep stabs, one of which, in the neck, nearly severing his head from his body, put an end to his sufferings. F. José Fernandez Andaluzian, a most holy and learned man, received a sword-thrust in his stomach; then, with his hands on the wound, he was led towards the prison, till, in the street of the Barrio Nuevo,

he was run through the body and shot through the head, so that his brains fell out—some of which were caught up by a woman and fried and eaten; a portion also being offered to others as the brains of a Jesuit.

In general, the tonsures of the victims were cut off and paraded about in triumph. F. John Ureta, professor of metaphysics in Valencia, after being murdered in the street, was immediately mutilated in this manner by the swords of his slayers. Brother Munoz, being one of about fifty who were praying together in the chapel when the murderers came to the door, was summoned by name to come out, that his life might be spared in consideration for his brother, who was favoured by the queen-regent, while the rest were to be slain. But he replied that he preferred remaining to die with his brethren; in consequence of which resolution guards were placed at the door all night, and the lives of all were spared; but F. Baovan and Brother Rudas, who had been compelled to lead the way to the chapel, were murdered.

From the college of the Jesuits the bands proceeded first to that of St. Thomas, where they killed nine of the friars, and destroyed all the books, crucifixes, and other images—and thence to the convent of St. Francis, where they perpetrated such frightful crimes that, in the words of the eye-witness, "the cloisters were deluged with blood; and for several days no one durst pass near the building alone, the spectacle being too horrible to behold." In that convent forty-five fathers were put to death, without reckoning those who afterwards died from their wounds, which would raise the number to fifty-two. The murderers also committed unheard-of abominations in the church, destroyed the images, fired at the tabernacle, and reduced the whole house to desolation.

Such was the first act in this tragedy; legal and military measures formed its conclusion.

112.

THE POPE AND THE PAINTER.

Pope Innocent VII. employed a celebrated painter to adorn his chapel in the Vatican. The artist expected to receive a liberal remuneration from the sovereign pontiff; but when his work drew near its conclusion, and no mention was yet made of the rich recompense for which he looked, he began to take great umbrage, and, in his resentment at what he considered to be his employer's niggardliness, resolved to have his revenge in the way of his art. The Pope had engaged him to paint the seven mortal sins, and, in addition to the seven compartments, he now made an eighth, in which he said he intended to represent a horrible monster.

"And what is this monster," asked the pontiff, "which I understand you intend to paint, and for which you destine the eighth compartment?"

"It is Ingratitude," replied the artist. "I know of no monster so horrible: it is the most hideous of all vices."

"Well," said the Pope smiling, for he perceived the artist's meaning, "I consent to your painting Ingratitude in as frightful colours as you please; but only on condition that opposite to it you represent Patience, the most heroic of all virtues. As yet you have made but small acquaintance with it, not being able to wait for the reward I had destined for you;" and at the same time he made him a handsome and liberal donation.

113.

GOD'S MERCY TO THE DYING.

A bishop in Scotland was travelling alone on horseback among the Highlands, when a sudden and violent storm of snow compelled him to seek shelter in a poor

cottage by the wayside. Its situation was wild and very lonely, and the inmates had no neighbours within miles. Shelter was willingly accorded to the stranger, and he was told that the father of the family was lying in an inner room dangerously ill. Ever attentive to the objects of his sacred mission, the good bishop desired to see him; and, on being admitted, proceeded to admonish the poor man of his approaching end; but he replied that, however ill he might appear, he felt certain he should recover. The bishop laboured to show him the groundlessness of his confidence, and bade him, with all earnestness, prepare for death. The man persisted, however, in declaring he should not die; and, on being pressed to give his reasons for so strange an assurance of security, he at length said that he was a Catholic, and that, during the last thirty years of his life, ever since he had come into that desolate region, he had prayed to God not to take him from the world without enabling him to receive the last Sacraments of holy Church. Pierced to the heart with reverential awe, the faithful pastor told him that he who now stood over him was a priest and a bishop, and that he had with him the holy oils and the precious Body of the Lord. "Then has God heard my prayer," cried the dying man; "and now may He let His servant depart in peace." The bishop at once heard his confession, and administered to him the holy and adorable mysteries of the Church; and before he withdrew, the soul of the faithful Christian was gone to behold its Judge.

ANOTHER INSTANCE.

A priest was hastening one dark and stormy night through one of the obscurest lanes in London, to assist some dying person to whom he had been summoned, when, on a sudden, the ground seemed to give way

under his feet, and he was precipitated through one of those cellar-apertures which, in some quarters of the metropolis, were so frequently to be found adjacent to the wall. Recovering from the first shock, a deep moan, proceeding as if from the farthest end of the sombre vault, engaged all his attention. "In God's name, who are you? and where am I fallen?" asked the priest.

"I know you," replied a feeble voice; "you are a priest of the holy Roman Church, come to console me at my death. I knew God in His mercy would not forsake me."

With some difficulty the priest procured a light; and the poor man received from his hands the last aids of religion, and then expired in his arms.

115.

ST. BASIL AND THE PREFECT MODESTUS.

Basil had not been long in his see of Cæsarea, when the Emperor Valens made a progress through the east (A.D. 371-2), with the determination of deposing the Catholic bishops, and putting Arians in their places. On arriving at Cæsarea he called before him the prefect Modestus, as he had done in the other cities, and bade him propose to Basil the alternative of communicating with the Arians or being ejected from his see. Modestus conveyed the emperor's pleasure to the bishop, and set before him the arguments which had been already found successful with inferior sort of men—that it was foolish to resist the force of the times, and to trouble the peace of the Church about questions of no practical importance; and he promised him the prince's favour for him and his friends if he complied.

Failing by soft language, he adopted a higher tone. "What is the meaning of this, you Basil," said the prefect, not deigning to style him bishop, "that you stand out against so great a prince, and are self-willed when others yield?"

Basil. What would you? and what is my extravagance? I have not yet learnt it.

Modestus. Your not worshipping after the emperor's manner, when the rest of your party have succumbed and acquiesced.

Basil. I have a Sovereign whose will is otherwise, nor can I bring myself to worship any creature—I, a creature of God, and commanded to be a god.*

Mod. For whom do you take me?

Basil. For a thing of naught, while such are your commands.

Mod. Is it nothing, then, for one like you to rank with myself, and have my fellowship?

Basil. You are prefect, and in noble place—I own it; yet God's majesty is greater. It is much for me to have your fellowship, for you are God's creature; but it is as much to have that of those over whom you rule; for Christianity lies not in distinction of persons, but in faith.

The prefect was angered at this, and rising from his chair, abruptly asked Basil if he did not fear the effects of his power.

Basil. What are they? Let me know them.

Mod. Confiscation, exile, tortures, death.

Basil. Think of some other threat; these have no terror for me. He cares not for confiscation who has nothing to lose, save these coarse garments and a few books. Nor does he care for exile who is not circumscribed by place, who has not his home where he now dwells, but finds every where a home, wherever he be thrown, or, rather, every where God's home, whose stranger and pilgrim he is. Neither can tortures harm a frame so frail as to break under the first blow. You could but strike once, and death would be gain. It would but send me the sooner to Him for whom I live and labour—nay, am dead rather than live, and to whom I have long been journeying.

Mod. No one yet ever spoke to Modestus with such freedom.

* Psalm lxxxi. 6.

Basil. Peradventure Modestus never yet fell in with a bishop; or surely in a like trial you would have heard like language. O prefect, in other things we are gentle, and more humble than all men living—for such is the commandment—so as not to raise our brow, I say not against “so great a prince,” but even against one of least account. Yet, when God’s honour is at stake, we think of nothing else, looking simply to Him. Fire and the sword, beasts of prey, irons to rend the flesh, are an indulgence rather than a terror to a Christian. Therefore insult, threaten, do your worst, make the most of your power. Let the emperor be informed of my resolve; he must himself know that I am not to be overcome by menaces even more frightful.

“At least,” said the prefect, with something of respect, “count it something to see the emperor in the midst of your flock, and among the number of your auditors. All that is required is, to omit from the creed the word ‘consubstantial.’”

Basil. A great thing in truth it is to see the emperor at church: the salvation of a soul is no light matter. But as to omitting aught from the creed, or adding aught thereto, I would not tolerate so much as a change in the order of the words.

Mod. I give you the night to ponder over it.

Basil. You will find me in the morning such as I am now.

The prefect immediately repaired to the emperor, and reported the failure of his attempt. Valens had generosity enough to admire the saint’s firmness and courage, and for the present left him in peace.

ST. MARTIN’S VISION.

One day, while Martin was praying in his cell, the evil spirit stood before him, enveloped in a glittering

radiance, by such appearance more easily to deceive him; clad also in royal robes, and crowned with a golden and jewelled diadem; with shoes covered with gold; his countenance serene, and looks bright and beaming, so as to seem nothing so little as what he was. At first Martin was dazzled at the sight, and for a time both kept silence. At length the evil one began: "Acknowledge," he said, "O Martin, him whom thou beholdest. I am Christ; I am now descending upon earth, and I wished first to manifest myself to thee." Still Martin kept silence, and returned no answer. The devil ventured to repeat his bold pretence. "Martin," he said, "why hesitate in believing, when thou seest I am Christ?" Then the saint, understanding by interior revelation that it was the evil one and not the Lord, answered, "Jesus announced not that He should thus come in glittering clothing, and radiant with a diadem. I will not believe thou art the Christ unless thou showest to me the wounds of the cross." At these words the tempter vanished as smoke, and filled the cell with so horrible an odour as to leave indubitable proofs who he was.

Haply (says a modern writer) this vision may teach that Christ comes not at this day in pride of intellect or reputation for ability. These are the glittering robes in which Satan is now arraying himself. Many spirits are abroad; more are issuing from the pit; the credentials they exhibit are the specious gifts of mind, beauty, richness, depth, originality. Christian, look hard at them with Martin in silence, and then ask for *the print of the nails*.

Some pious ladies were one day struck with astonishment at hearing a poor illiterate man discoursing in the divinest manner on the adorable perfections of God

and the tender love of our Lord Jesus Christ; and one among them offered to teach him to read, that he might be able to make use of the many admirable books of devotion with which the faithful are familiar. He thanked her for her charitable offer, but said that, before he accepted it, he must consult his Divine Master. He went and knelt before his crucifix, and almost immediately returned. "I have received my answer," he said: "My son, what books will they put in thy hands? or what will they give thee to read? I am thy book. In contemplating Me thou canst always read the great love I bear thee. A God suffering and dying for love of thee—is not this enough to occupy thee for time and for eternity?"

118.

THE ABBÉ MULLOIS.

This truly Christian philanthropist was one day visiting a poor woman whom he found lying in a cellar on damp straw, when he suddenly heard frightful shrieks issuing from an upper floor. Rushing up stairs he pushed open the door of the room from which the cries had proceeded, and beheld a powerful man of a ferocious aspect, habited in a ragged shirt and tattered trousers, alternately striking and kicking a miserable delicate-looking woman who was lying at his feet, now apparently in a state of unconsciousness. The good abbé darted towards her assailant, and with all the strength he possessed arrested his arm, which, with doubled fist, was about to inflict a last murderous blow. The man, whose fury was only increased by this unexpected interference, seized the priest by the collar, and though M. Mullois was of tall stature, lifted him up as if he had been a child, and held him suspended at the window, which happened to be open.

"There, M. Black-robe!" roared he; "I'll teach

you to meddle with my affairs: you'll not be back in a hurry to disturb my domestic peace."

The abbé gave himself up as lost; but conscious of his superior strength and the entire power he had over him, the ruffian set down his intended victim, and, taking him by both shoulders, gazed in his face with flashing eyes, as if meditating in what way best to satisfy his vengeance. Seizing the moment, the priest, whose coolness and presence of mind never forsook him, said quietly, "Gently, my friend; you are in too great a hurry; you can settle with me another time; I want you now for something else. Do you know what is going on below while you are busy beating your wife?" The man's attention was arrested, and he insensibly relaxed his hold. Pursuing his advantage, the abbé continued: "A woman is dying in the cellar on some straw, I might rather say a dung-heap, under this very roof: you would not have this happen, I know, if you could help it; you are not such a ruffian at heart as you look at this moment. Come, I'll pay for the straw, and you'll go and fetch it." So saying he took a twenty-sou piece from his pocket and handed it to the man, who by this time had recovered his calmness, and hardly seemed to know what to make of the adventure. Taking off his cap he said to the abbé with every demonstration of respect, "Ah, sir, if you talk like this, it is another thing. I have not lost my feelings of humanity; I will help you to assist this poor creature; we must not let a human being perish like that;" and off he set to fetch the straw.

Meanwhile the poor wife had come to herself, and M. Mullois did his best to help her to a seat and give her such restoratives as were within reach. The man soon returned, looking like another being. He entered the room where the poor old woman lay stretched on the floor, and spread the fresh straw in another corner; he then lifted her with the gentlest care, as a mother would her babe, on to the clean bed. A neighbour wanted to help him, but he would not hear of

assistance, saying, "I began the good work, and I'll carry it through." His eyes were full of tears, and he made the abbé a sign that he wished to speak with him. They went aside to the window; but this man, so lately raging like a demon, was too much moved to be able to utter a word. He could only take the priest's hand, which he shook with most expressive violence.

"Well, well, my friend," said the latter, scarcely less overcome, "I was sure you were not a bad man; I knew you were capable of doing a kind action."

"O, sir," answered he, "it is you who have done all this: I hardly recognise myself—I am not the same man. You have conquered me—I who would never hear reason. You are indeed a true pastor."

M. Mullois secured this opportunity for pleading the cause of the injured wife. "Ah, my friend, you must feel that your conduct cannot be justified. You, who have so good a heart, have you ever reflected that when a man marries a wife, it is not to ill-use her? She has her faults, I have no doubt; but have you not yours also? You must bear with each other. Come, now, promise me that you will never beat her again."

"No," said the man, "I cannot promise you that, for I know what will happen;" and all his bad passions seemed awaking at the thought.

The abbé, however, did not give up his point. "Come," he said, "you are only joking; a great strong manly fellow like you, you would never be such a coward as to strike a poor little woman, young and delicate too, who puts herself in your power, and looks to you for protection. No, no, my friend, if you were to say it a hundred times, I would not believe it; just think. Besides, after what I have seen you do for a stranger, you would never have the face to ill-treat your own wife."

At length the man yielded, and gave the abbé his solemn promise (which, by the way, he wound up with a tremendous oath), and, what is more, he kept it; for on a subsequent visit the wife came out to meet M.

Mullois with every expression of gratitude. "What a blessing it is to have known you! My husband now scarcely ever gets drunk; and though he is sometimes in a passion with me, he has never beaten me since. Sometimes he'll double his fist and make as if he were going to strike me; but he stops short, and says, 'It's well for you that priest came here; if it wasn't for him, I'd give you a *hiding*.'"

But this was not all. The husband reformed his life, and went regularly to the Abbé Mullois to confession. Shortly before New-Year's-day 1855 he came to the priest, and after some hesitation, he said, "I am not altogether happy to-day, sir."

"How so, my good friend?"

"Why, you see I am poor, and I should like to be rich just for a minute or so. Here's New-Year's-day, and I want to make a little—no, a large present; you have been so good to me, and, d'ye see, I can do nothing in return. However, I'll say this; poor as I am, among all your great friends there is not one who is more true and stanch than I am: night or day I'm at your service. Look here, M. l'abbé; if ever there comes a revolution, and they want to have a go at the priests, come to me. Guns and muskets!—what care I for a thousand of them? I would be killed a hundred times before they should touch a hair of your head."

On another occasion he paid a visit to an extensive forge, the workmen at which had the character of being among the most ferocious in Paris. He was warned beforehand that he would probably get roughly handled if he ventured among them; but to this he simply replied, that if they were as bad as they were represented, there was the more occasion for him to go, as these were the men among whom priests were wanted. The shop lay in one of the most crowded and dirty quarters of Paris; and mounting by a ladder, the abbé found himself amidst a number of men with bare arms and grisly countenances, who were hammering, and, it

must be added, cursing and swearing, with all their might. The men stared at him as he made his appearance; and as he looked round, and caught some of the sinister expressions of the countenances that surrounded him, he began to think that it was a hopeless business he was upon, and that he might have acted more wisely, as far as he was personally concerned, in staying away. However, there he was, and he felt something must be done. Accosting, therefore, a man who happened to be nearest him, he said in a friendly tone, "My friend, you have hard work here." The man made no reply, but deliberately turned his back upon him. He addressed a similar remark to another, and all the answer he received was a single "Yes," uttered in so forbidding a tone as to repel all further attempts at conversation. A third, even, before he came up to him, looked at him with flashing eyes, and had begun to make some sort of menacing gesture, when suddenly the first he had addressed glanced furtively at him, and, rushing up to the foreman, whispered a few words in his ear.

The abbé fully expected this was a request in the name of the company to enforce his expulsion, and cast about in his mind how he should best withdraw, when, to his surprise, the workman advanced towards him, cap in hand, and, with every demonstration of respect, proclaimed with faltering voice before his fellows, who had now gathered round them, that it was to this good priest he owed every thing. M. Mullois was at first confounded; but, on examining the smutty features of his newly-found friend, he discovered in him a quondam client, to whom, on some of his exploring expeditions, he had rendered a service.

At once, as if by magic, the countenances of all changed, and their dingy hands were stretched out to prove their welcome. The good abbé was soon at ease with them: he talked to one and all; asked them about their homes, their families, their needs; manifested a warm interest in all that concerned them; and

the result was, that the men were so delighted with him they would hardly let him leave them; not, indeed, until they had extorted a promise that he would come and see them again. This he did, and not once nor twice, but organised a regular system of meetings, or *conferences*, to be held once every week. The greater part of these once wild and dissolute men are now (1855) become punctual in their attendance at church and constant at confession.

The Abbé Mullois is the editor of the *Messenger de la Charité*, a weekly record of charitable works and acts performed all over the world, and also of the condition of the lower classes throughout France. Out of admiration for his writings and good deeds the emperor lately selected him as his chaplain.

PIUS IX. AND THE SLAVE.

In the early part of the present year, 1856, an American family from New Orleans arrived in Italy, accompanied by two slaves. One of them at Florence availed himself of the privilege of the European soil, and claimed his freedom. The other, a female, accompanied the family to Rome, where she received the sacrament of confirmation from the hands of Mgr. Bedini, lately the representative of the Holy See in America. The young slave had conceived an ardent desire to receive the benediction of the Holy Father; and an application had accordingly been made in the proper quarter for permission to station herself in some public place along which the Pope was to pass. But before the day arrived, a mounted dragoon left at the Trinità di Monte, where our slave was staying, a letter of admission to a private audience, addressed to Miss L—, the subject of this narrative. At the hour appointed Margaret L— presented herself at the Vatican, and was conducted to

the audience-chamber. Among the persons already assembled were the members of the family who had been her sponsors at confirmation, whose surprise at so unexpected a meeting in such a place may be easily conceived. But their astonishment was increased when the *cameriere* on duty called aloud the name of Miss Margaret L—. The poor slave arose, the door opened, and she found herself in the presence of the Vicar of Jesus Christ; who, extending his arms towards her, as she sank at his feet, said, "Come, my daughter, come. I have chosen that you should precede all those great ladies waiting in the ante-chamber, because, if you are little in the eyes of the world, you are perhaps very great in the sight of God." He then bestowed upon her the apostolic benediction.





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